

Libya denies British nuclear reports

CAIRO (AP) — Libya on Saturday dismissed as "unprecedented" British claims that it constitutes a nuclear threat. The official news agency JANA said it was all part of a Christian-Jewish plot to eradicate Islam. "Libya is not interested in, and neither does it have the capability of, owning nuclear weapons," a JANA commentary by the agency's foreign editor said. Any way, it said, Libya is subject to annual inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). According to JANA, Britain's Defence Secretary Malcolm Rifkind told the British paper the Daily Express that Libya will be able to make nuclear weapons within 10 years. But an Associated Press scan of recent British dailies did not show any interview with Mr. Rifkind. Instead, it showed the Times of London and The Independent saying defence experts assume that countries like Iraq or Libya could develop ballistic missiles within ten years. Their comments were connected to a report of a speech Mr. Rifkind gave on Tuesday to the Centre for Defence Studies at King's College, London.

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Villager wounded in Israeli shelling

TYRE (AFP) — A Lebanese villager on Saturday was wounded when Israeli troops in South Lebanon returned fire after a rocket attack by guerrillas, police said. The Israeli army opened fire with tanks and mortars at the Wadi Sallu valley and Tamriyah village, facing Israel's self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon. The Lebanese police said. A villager suffered minor wounds after being hit with shrapnel, they added. Guerrillas had fired two Russian-made Katyusha rockets and four mortar shells at Israel's proxy militia, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), in Qantara on the edge of the "security zone," according to security sources here. The attack was claimed by two Lebanese groups, the pro-Syrian Amal and fundamentalist Iranian-backed Hizbollah. In a joint statement from the southern port of Sidon.

Riviera traders report alleged FIS threats

NICE, France (R) — Six Muslim shopkeepers in the French Riviera town of Nice have told police they received threats and extortion demands, supposedly from Algerian fundamentalists, police sources said Saturday. They said the shopkeepers complained they received letters signed by the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) ordering them to abide by Muslim practices and threatening punishment if they kept selling alcoholic drinks. Telephone callers had also demanded money in the name of religious solidarity. The sources said the letters did not have the usual format of FIS documents but police were taking the threats seriously and the Nice public prosecutor had opened an investigation. The Algerian government cancelled elections that the FIS was poised to win two years ago and banned the fundamentalist movement in the ensuing wave of violence.

Detained Britons leave Somaliland

LONDON (AFP) — Thirteen Britons who had been held captive by gunmen in the breakaway Somali region of Somaliland were flown to Djibouti, a Foreign Office spokesman said here Saturday. The 13 men had been held since Wednesday in Hargeisa, in northwestern Somalia, by an armed group demanding payment for services rendered to Rimfire, a bomb disposal and mine clearance company which employed them. On Friday, the territory's self-styled president Mohammed Ibrahim Egal said the Britons were free to go, but U.N. sources in Mogadishu said they were still being held late Friday. Rimfire said Saturday the workers would spend "two or three days out of the country while we take stock of the situation."

Uneasy calm in Kabul amid minor fighting

KABUL (AFP) — Minor small-arms fire between a Shiite Muslim faction and troops loyal to President Burhanuddin Rabbani disrupted civilian traffic to south Kabul on Saturday, as an uneasy calm prevailed in most of the war-torn capital. The early morning firefight between Shiite Hezbe-Wahdat faction and pro-Rabbani troops near Wazir Akbar Khan square, although a local affair, was a repetition of a similar shootout on Friday. Both factions have accused the other of starting the shooting in which five to seven civilians were reported wounded. Over the past four days, thousands of residents from frontline areas have poured into other areas of Kabul ferrying possessions in peshkars. "Most of those who could have already fled," said one man, waiting to hire out his car. "Nobody wants to move now because they know the ceasefire is over."

Yemenis sign reconciliation deal today

Saleh affirms commitment to accord, pays tribute to King Hussein's efforts

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter with agency dispatches

AMMAN — Yemeni government leaders and politicians converged on Amman Saturday to sign a reconciliation and reform agreement to end a six-month political crisis plaguing their country.

More than 150 Yemeni politicians, from party and tribal chiefs to ousted presidents are expected to attend the signing of the agreement that they hope would save their country's unity.

Hundreds of Yemeni and Jordanian flags fluttered from lampposts to mark Jordan's largest such political gathering since an Arab League summit in 1987.

Banners welcoming the reconciliation hung above Amman's main streets to greet Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Vice-President Ali Saleh Al Beidh.

"We hope the signing of the pact will provide the proper way to end the political crisis that has burdened the hearts of our people and the Arab Nation and posed a serious threat to our march to democracy and unity," President Saleh said on arrival in Amman. He was received upon arrival by His Majesty King Hussein.

"We hope that all parties

will endeavour to transform this document to practical implementation with the solidarity that would achieve the hoped (for) objectives of building the modern Yemeni state," he told the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Mr. Saleh also called on his vice president to join hands "in implementing the agreement on the ground... in such a way that consolidating the basis of a better future."

Among the early arrivals for the signing of the reconciliation charter were former Yemeni presidents Ali Nasser Mohammad and Abdullah Salal.

Another former head of state, Abdul Rahman Iryani, was also expected here.

Also expected was Sheikh Abdullah Al Ahmar, co-leader of the Al Islah Islamic Party, which is the third partner with Mr. Saleh's General People's Congress (GPC) and Mr. Beidh's Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) in the ruling coalition in Sanaa.

Esmat Abdul Meguid, secretary-general of the Cairo-based 22-member Arab League, arrived Saturday. A representative of the European Union was also due to attend the signing.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Jordanian government leaders and senior officials were among those wel-

coming the Yemeni president and his accompanying delegation.

The Yemeni president was accorded an official welcome ceremony which included a 21-gun salute.

"We hope the signing of the pact will be the beginning to solve Yemen's crisis," said Mr. Nasser Mohammad, South Yemen's former president, who has been living in Damascus since a military coup in 1986.

"The meeting and the signatures are not the only things that matter," he said. "What we are also concerned with is goodwill and the desire to implement this agreement towards building a unified state and achieve security and stability."

In an arrival statement Mr. Saleh paid tribute to King Hussein's efforts and Jordan's role in helping to end the dispute between the Yemeni leaders.

Dr. Abdul Meguid said the reconciliation accord was "a document of pan-Arab and national importance."

He said that the signing of the document would pave the ground for stability and security in Yemen.

King Hussein has always spearheaded efforts designed to bring about reconciliation among Arab states, and among

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His Majesty King Hussein Saturday receives Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh upon the Yemeni leader's arrival in Amman to sign a national reconciliation agreement (Photo by Yusef Al 'Allan)

Saudi family disowns 'terrorist' member

RIYADH (AP) — The Ben Laden family, one of the richest non-royal families in Saudi Arabia, issued a statement Saturday to disassociate itself from a member who has been widely linked to Islamic extremist groups. In a televised message to Saudi newspapers, Bakr bin Laden, brother of Osama bin Laden, wrote that he and "all members of the family, whose number exceeds 50, would like to express their regret, denunciation and condemnation of all acts that Osama bin Laden may have committed, which we do not condone, and which we reject." The engineer is the brother of Osama, who is currently based in Sudan and who is held to be a prominent leader of the so-called "Afghan Arabs." Osama bin Laden has been mentioned particularly by a group tried in Yemen on charges of committing several acts of terrorism. They are said to be linked with the bomb attacks on two hotels in Aden in December 1992 in which two Austrian tourists were killed. The blasts narrowly missed 100 American servicemen deployed with Operation Restore Hope that was then starting in Somalia.

Negotiations continue on accord modalities

By P.V. Vivekanand Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Yemeni leaders sign a reconciliation agreement in Amman today, but they had not agreed on the modalities of implementing the accord by late yesterday, political sources said.

The sources expected that Vice-President Ali Saleh Al Beidh might even need "some last-minute persuasion" before he actually puts his pen to the agreement with President Ali Abdullah Saleh to end the seven-month political crisis plaguing their country.

Even after signing the accord, Yemeni sources said, Mr. Beidh is not ready to return to Sanaa, the federal capital, to formally assume office and his constitutional duties.

One of the key demands of President Saleh and his General People's Congress (GPC) is Mr. Beidh's immediate return to Sanaa to assume office — something that the southern leader has refused to do after he left Sanaa in August and ensconced himself in his southern stronghold of Aden.

A Yemeni mediation committee was holding urgent talks here Saturday evening in a bid to come up with a compromise. But both the GPC and Mr. Beidh's Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) were insisting on their positions, the sources said.

"The YSP is insisting that

Mr. Beidh will go to Sanaa and assume his duties as vice-president only after tangible progress is achieved in the implementation of the agreement," said a Yemeni source.

The southerners are also demanding that the Sanaa-based government — headed by the YSP's Haidar Abu Bakr Al Attas — move to Aden and function from the capital of former South Yemen for the first two months immediately after the signing of the Amman agreement.

The YSP, however, is willing to make one concession: It is willing to attend meetings of the presidential council if it met somewhere outside Sanaa and, more importantly and significantly, under the chairmanship of the southern vice-president rather than the northern president.

Jordanian officials were involved in mediation efforts and it was not immediately known how far such efforts were making headway.

In a bid to explain his position to other Arab leaders on his way to Amman, Mr. Beidh visited Cairo and Damascus for talks with the Egyptian and Syrian presidents.

Mr. Beidh was originally expected to arrive Friday and His Majesty King Hussein was expecting to have some time with him in a bid to settle some of the differences.

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Delay better than issues left unresolved — Rabin

CAIRO (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said it was preferable to delay the April 13 deadline for Israel's withdrawal from the Palestinian self-rule areas of Gaza and Jericho to give both sides a chance to clear up matters.

In an interview published in the Egyptian newspaper Al Ahram on Saturday, Mr. Rabin said Israelis and Palestinians needed time to reach agreement on everyday matters affecting their daily lives in the areas due to come under Palestinian autonomy.

"I repeat my wish for the success of the agreement, but it is better to have a month's delay in implementing it so that matters that could ignite the situation will be clear and agreed upon for us and the Palestinians," Mr. Rabin told Al Ahram's correspondent in occupied Jerusalem.

Mr. Rabin used a hypothetical car crash between Palestinians and Israelis as an example of the small matters that could jeopardise the peace accord signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in Washington in September. "How would we treat such a situation, and in what court? We must specify from the beginning the solutions to all these small problems or else we will regret it and the accord will fail."

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat said Thursday delays in implementation of the accord were dangerous and accused the Israeli government of taking its time over dates specified in the peace accord.

Under that accord, Israel was to have begun a pullout of troops from the Gaza Strip and Jericho on Dec. 13 as a prelude to Palestinian self-rule. Several rounds of talks since then have failed to remove remaining obstacles to the pullout.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Nabil Shaath said Friday the PLO and Israel had begun preparing the text of the final agreement that would allow Palestinian self-rule to start in Gaza and Jericho.

Dr. Shaath said in an interview with Israel Television the document could be ready for signing by Mr. Arafat and Mr. Rabin in about three weeks.

"We have started the final

Settler shot dead in W. Bank ambush

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Hundreds of Jewish settlers demonstrated at road junctions in Israel and the occupied West Bank on Saturday to protest against the slaying of a pregnant settler by Palestinian assailants.

The victim was hit in the head and stomach by shots from a parked car as she, her husband and their two children drove along a major West Bank highway towards their home in the settlement of Ariel early Saturday. The husband and the children escaped unhurt.

The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas claimed responsibility for the nighttime shooting ambush. "Hamas will turn every day into hell for the Israeli," said a leaflet issued by the group.

On Saturday evening, after the end of the Jewish Sabbath, hundreds of settlers staged protests at several junctions in Israel and the West Bank.

The Israeli army imposed a curfew on six Palestinian villages following the attack near the Barqan settlement in the north of the West Bank. Troops arrested several Palestinians in a huge manhunt.

The 30-year-old victim, who

Clinton says U.S. ready for Bosnia strikes if arms remain

Combined agency dispatches

U.S. President Bill Clinton, saying it was unclear if Bosnian Serbs were withdrawing all their heavy guns ringing Sarajevo, Saturday said U.S. warplanes would "exact a heavy price" if the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) ultimatum was not met.

"America cannot afford to ignore conflicts in Europe," Mr. Clinton said in a nationally-broadcast address from the Oval Office.

Mr. Clinton, who spoke shortly after talking by telephone with French President Francois Mitterrand, told Americans that it may be necessary to launch air attacks if allied demands are not met.

The Bosnian Serbs face a deadline of midnight GMT Sunday (7 p.m. EST) for all heavy guns within a 20-kilometre radius of the Bosnian capital to be pulled back or placed under United Nations control.

"If the Serbs and others fully comply with NATO's ultimatum, there will be no need to use force against anyone. But we are determined to make good on NATO's word and we are prepared to act, our actions will be determined by one

thing — the facts on the ground," Mr. Clinton said.

With the NATO deadline looming, elite troops from three European nations took up positions Saturday in snowy hills around Sarajevo to secure heavy weapons turned over by Bosnian Serbs.

Four hundred Russian peacekeepers also headed for Sarajevo as part of a deal in which the Serbs agreed to comply with the ultimatum on withdrawing their firepower from the Bosnian capital.

United Nations officials expressed confidence that Bosnian Serbs who have besieged Sarajevo for 22 months would remove their heavy weapons or put them under strict U.N. control by the NATO deadline.

Pilots have identified some Bosnian Serb gun batteries still pointed towards Sarajevo and locked onto them in practice bombing runs, the officer overseeing air attack plans on the USS Saratoga in the Adriatic Sea said Saturday.

U.S. Rear Admiral William H. Wright said he expected "some degree of violations" of the NATO ultimatum, but that it was up to NATO and political leaders to decide whether air strikes were warranted.

The Bosnian Serb leader,

Radovan Karadzic, had pledged to comply by midnight Saturday, 24 hours earlier, but U.N. spokesman Bill Aikman said heavy snow might make that timetable tough to meet.

"Given the weather, they'll probably be using the extra 24 hours to get them out," he said.

Some estimates put the number of Serb mortars, tanks, artillery and other heavy weapons around Sarajevo at up to 500. The Muslim-led government has more troops than the Serbs, but considerably less firepower.

The U.N. special representative for former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi, said he was worried as he headed into a meeting Saturday with Mr. Karadzic in Pale, the Serb stronghold southeast of Sarajevo.

"But at the same time there are some encouraging elements," he said without elaborating.

Special Russian envoy to the former Yugoslavia, Vitaly Churkin, warned Saturday "rash" action by NATO in Sarajevo could spark a crisis between Russia and the West.

Mr. Churkin, interviewed by Russian television before his

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All tracks of bilateral talks resume this week

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — All four tracks of the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations will reconvene in Washington Feb. 22 after the presidents day holiday break, spokesman Michael McCurry said.

The direct peace talks between Israel and its Arab partners — Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians — resumed on Feb. 15 in a new, more streamlined informal format.

Asked if this week's talks had been fruitful, the spokesman replied: "I think they had interesting conversations. Whether or not they were fruitful is for the parties to determine."

In a related development, Robert Pelletreau was sworn in Friday as the new assistant

secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs (see page 5). He replaces Edward Djerejian, who is the new U.S. ambassador to Israel.

Mr. McCurry pointed out that the United States maintains its own "peace team," which works under the guidance of special Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross. The spokesman said Mr. Pelletreau is "beginning to engage very fully in the work of the peace team, but remember he has a portfolio that expands well beyond the peace process itself."

Syria assails Israel

Israel is trying to prevent Syria and the United States from establishing normal rela-

tions, the official Syrian daily Al Thawra charged Saturday.

The paper said Israel "is anxious to detach Syrian-U.S. relations from the area of dialogue," fearing that "solid, balanced relations may be established, enabling the whole peace process to be brought back to its legitimate basis."

Israel was escalating tension in South Lebanon "in its customary arrogant and aggressive way" in order to pressure U.S. President Bill Clinton into "ending or postponing the U.S. role in the peace process," Al Thawra said.

Israel tried to torpedo the Geneva summit meeting between Mr. Clinton and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad on Jan. 16 "through pressure and

intensive moves inside the U.S. administration and in the region," the paper added.

"However, we believe the Clinton administration is aware of these moves and what lies behind them."

Israel and Syria failed to make headway during peace talks in Washington earlier in the week, Israeli Deputy Minister Yossi Beilin told reporters Thursday.

Asked whether Israel had moved closer to the Syrian demand that Israel fully withdraw from the Golan Heights seized in 1967 and partially annexed in 1981, Mr. Beilin said, "regrettably, no."

Israel has refused to withdraw without first getting security guarantees from Syria. Israel threatened to launch a

massive operation in South Lebanon after a rocket on northern Israel on Wednesday, which was claimed by dissidents opposed to the Palestinian autonomy deal.

The attack provoked intense diplomatic moves by the United States, with Washington sending messages to Damascus and Beirut calling for restraint.

Israel blamed Syria, which has some 35,000 troops in Lebanon.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said the attack was a "violation" of a U.S.-brokered deal with Damascus last July to halt Hezbollah guerrilla strikes on Jewish communities.

The deal followed a seven-day blitz by Israeli forces in South Lebanon which killed 132 people and wounded 500.

Iran rejects U.N. report on human rights violations

TEHRAN (Agencies) — Iran on Saturday rejected a "baseless" United Nations report on human rights violations, saying the official news agency IRNA reported.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman quoted by IRNA said there were no political prisoners in Iran and those charged with drug-trafficking, terrorism and terrorism were subject to "due process of law."

"The number of prisoners in Iran is remarkably low," he said.

The spokesman also dismissed allegations in the report, quoted by the BBC, that there were 10,000 political prisoners in Iran.

"The claims are biased, politically-motivated and influenced by the enemies of the Islamic republic," he said.

The Human Rights Commission charged in a report published in Geneva on Friday that Iran's human rights situation "did not change much since 1993."

The report, drawn up by special rapporteur Reynaldo Gallo Pohl, urged Iran to reform its penal code to protect the rights of defendants and ensure equality between men and women before the law.

It also expressed the author's concern about the harassment of the media, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) return to Iran, and "adversely affective action" to prevent its secret service agents from harassing Iranian living outside the country.

The report said there were nearly 10,000 political prisoners in Iran and freedom of expression there was constantly under attack.

Mr. Pohl, whose 60-page report was the latest in a series he has produced for the commission since 1986, also recorded what he said were many cases of persecution of religious minorities and of women.

"Comparing recent events with those of recent years, one has the impression that the situation did not change markedly in 1993," the report, which will come up for adoption by the commission in early March, declared.

"The requirements for due process of law have not yet been met, and no plans are known for making good existing legal shortcomings," Mr. Pohl said.

The investigator, who has not been allowed into Iran for many months, said he based his findings on both official and unofficial accounts of events in Iran and on foreign court decisions in the cases of murders of Iranian exiles.

The report noted rejection by Iran of most of the charges recorded by Mr. Pohl, and assertions by Tehran that he had little knowledge of Islamic law.

"The fact is that international bodies monitoring human rights are required to base themselves on international principles and instruments, and national laws, institutions and practices must change to match international laws, not vice-versa," the Salvadorean diplomat said.

Mr. Pohl recommended that the commission, currently holding its annual six-week session in Geneva, tell Iran "to take urgent and effective action to prevent its secret service agents... mounting attempts on the lives of exiles and refugees, whatever their political leanings."

Iran should also be told to investigate such incidents in which other countries implicated Iranian agents and cooperate with foreign governments in their investigations.

He said Tehran should be told to ensure political trials were open and that the accused had qualified defence lawyers, and be urged to recognise full equality of rights between men and women in its civil legislation.

Iran should also eliminate the use of violence by groups which intimidated newspapers and magazines, ensure the protection of journalists, and eliminate violence as a means of cowering the spoken and written press, Mr. Pohl declared.

In a comment on the report, the Paris-based National Council of Resistance of Iran, a major exile grouping, said the report had only been able to reveal "a small part of the ongoing genocide in Iran."

"The magnitude of the repression prevailing in Iran prevents access to direct information on the countless crimes of the ruling regime," the council's leader Massoud Rajavi, declared in a statement delivered to news offices in Geneva.

The U.N. report cited a French inquiry into the murder of former Iranian Prime Minister Shapour Bakhtiar in Paris and other unsolved murders of Iranian exiles in Europe.



LONG TREK: Some of the 30,000 displaced southern Sudanese walking 100 kilometres to Angawa camp in Maridi on Friday. They move in groups of 6,000 and start their walk about 4 p.m., continuing long into the night so that they are not hit by bombing from warplanes in military operations in the south. At left is a member of the armed Sudanese People's Liberation Army (APL) protecting the group (AFP photo).

Lebanon's railroad to make a comeback

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanon has asked a French company to study plans to revive and expand the national railroad, in its latest drive to rebuild the war-shattered country.

The project, which will cost \$500 million, was unveiled this week at a press conference by the chairman of the Societe Francaise d'Etudes et de Realisations Ferroviaires (Sofrerail), Paul Monserie.

A two-day railroad covering 170 kilometres of tracks will link the southern port of Tyre to the northern city of Tripoli on the Mediterranean Sea while a single railway will link Tripoli to the Syrian border further north.

Construction is expected to get underway in June and it is to be completed in 1996, according to Rabbah Ammash, chairman of the Lebanese railroads office.

International firms will be invited to apply for tenders over the next four months, he told AFP.

Trains will travel at 120 kilometres per hour and there will be 20 stops along the way, 12 stations as well as several bridges.

"Lebanon is the first country in the Middle East to have thought of building a regional railroad," Mr. Monserie said on Thursday.

"The project is aimed at easing traffic congestion in the capital (Beirut) and its suburbs... as well as creating links with markets in Syria and the hinterland," Transport Minister Omar Meskawi said.

Lebanon is hoping to restore its status as the financial capital of the Middle East as it prepares for an era of peace in the region.

French engineers built the first railroad in Lebanon during Ottoman rule here in 1892. The network was modernised and expanded during the 1920-1943 French mandate.

The original railroad linked Beirut to Damascus and the Syrian town of Hama and was known as the Hijaz line.

In 1961 Lebanon set up the national office of railroads, but it proved short-lived as the Lebanese preferred moving goods and people by cars.

The war which broke out in 1975 buried the railroad: Tracks were destroyed in the factional fighting or torn up and sold by the religious and secular militias which ruled the country.

NEWS IN BRIEF

U.S. and Turkey discuss Bosnian crisis

ISTANBUL (R) — U.S. President Bill Clinton and Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller held a half hour phone conversation on the Bosnian war on Friday, the semi-official Anatolia news agency reported. Quoting the prime minister's press office, Anatolia said Mr. Clinton called Ms. Ciller to discuss NATO efforts to end the Serb siege of Sarajevo. NATO has threatened air strikes against Bosnian Serbs if they do not withdraw their heavy guns around the city by Sunday. Ms. Ciller told reporters after the talk that she and Mr. Clinton were hopeful about the developments in Bosnia after a NATO ultimatum. Anatolia also said the U.S. president had sent Ms. Ciller a letter, praising her trip to Bosnia earlier this month with Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

UAE in blood drive against AIDS

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has mounted a drive to maintain self-sufficiency in blood as part of measures to prevent the spread of AIDS, an official report said on Friday. The drive includes seminars and booklets on the benefits of blood donation and the dangers of the acquired immunity deficiency syndrome, which has affected more than 1,000 people in the emirates. "Last year, four awareness campaigns were organised, including one for women, to encourage people to donate blood," the report quoted Amin Amiri, director of UAE blood banks, as saying. As a result, the number of donors sharply increased and donated blood rose by more than 10 per cent to around 20,000 units, he said. "Indians topped the list of donors in recent years, followed by Syrians, Jordanians, Sudanese, Egyptians, Palestinians, Britons and Filipinos." He said tests for donors showed a few Arabs carried the AIDS virus while blood bank records showed no donors from what he called AIDS-hit countries in Africa. People from 64 countries donated in 1993, he added.

Israel to consider peacekeeping operations

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — Israel is working out plans to join in peacekeeping operations, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said Friday after meeting with U.N. Security General Boutros Ghali. A team of Israeli officials is to meet at U.N. headquarters here next week to discuss the plans, which include sending a medical team to Africa, according to an Israeli spokesman. Mr. Beilin and Dr. Ghali also discussed the Mideast peace process during their talks, which U.N. spokesman Ahmad Fawzi characterised as "very cordial," noting that the two officials were long-time friends. Relations between the world body and Israel have warmed in recent years, especially since the signing of a peace agreement with the Palestinians in September.

Lebanon jails 3 for importing Israeli salt

BEIRUT (R) — A Lebanese military court jailed two Lebanese and a Greek for breaking a boycott of Israeli goods by smuggling Israeli salt into the country, the official news agency said. The national news agency said a Lebanese and a Greek were sentenced on Friday to three years of hard labour and penalised four million Lebanese pounds (\$2.350) each. A third Lebanese man convicted in the case was jailed for one year, the agency said.

Tunisia says BBC reporter quoted Islamists

TUNIS (R) — Tunisia said on Friday it had ordered the expulsion of a British radio correspondent because he gave too much emphasis to the views of Muslim militants. British Broadcasting Corporation reporter Alfred Hermdia's press accreditation was revoked because "he gave great place in his reports, to defamatory and baseless rumours spread from abroad by... fugitive terrorists belonging to the fundamentalist sphere," the Tunisian government said in a statement. Officials said they had given Mr. Hermdia a week to leave the country. The BBC said in a statement in London on Wednesday it had issued a strong protest to the Tunisian authorities over a decision on Saturday to expel Mr. Hermdia, saying no reason had been given.

Ankara refuses Europe observers for elections

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish parliamentary speaker Husamettin Cindoruk on Friday rejected a European parliament request to send observers to oversee local elections next month.

In a letter to European Parliament Speaker Eggon Klepsch, Mr. Cindoruk said the 450-seat single chamber Turkish parliament was "disappointed" at the recent European initiative.

The pro-Kurd Democracy Party (DEP) has been leading a vigorous campaign among various European bodies to get a team of observers sent to oversee the municipal elections on March 27.

The DEP, which holds 17 seats in the Turkish parliament, has expressed doubts that the elections will be held democratically and has urged observers to be sent, especially to the southeast mainly-Kurd region of Anatolia.

But in his letter Mr. Cindoruk argued: "This resolution (by the European Parliament) is a clear discrimination between different regions in Turkey... and ignores the maturity of the democratic process in Turkey."

"There is no logical reason to justify the presence of foreign observers in order to ensure fair and free local elections."

"The European Parliament gives the impression of having been badly directed by certain foreign elements in conjunction with terrorist organisations," he wrote.

But he added that any foreigner was free to visit the country as a tourist during the elections, without any "status as an observer or scrutineer."

A similar request by the DEP to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe was turned down, the CSCE believing that only governments were capable of organising a team of observers.

Vote for removing immunity
A Turkish parliamentary committee recommended that four deputies be stripped of their immunity from prosecution, removing a hurdle for their trial in two separate cases.

Three are Kurds accused by a state security court of making separatist propaganda during election speeches in Kurdistan. The fourth is accused of insulting the founder of secular Turkey Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

A parliamentary official said on Friday the decision was taken on Thursday by a joint session of the constitution and internal affairs committees.

A vote by the 450-seat parliament is needed to remove the immunity of DEP deputies Leyla Zana, Orhan Dogan and Mahmut Alinak and Welfare Party (RP) Deputy Hasan Mezarcı. It was not immediately known when the matter would be discussed on the parliament floor.

A state security court is seeking to try Ms. Zana, Mr. Dogan and Mr. Alinak on charges of making separatist propaganda.

Mr. Alinak, deputy for the mainly-Kurdish Sirnak province, said he could get a two-year jail term if tried and found guilty.

"Most of the Sirnak people don't speak Turkish. I asked them how they were, in Kurdish," he told the Anatolia news agency.

DEP charges that an official campaign of harassment and intimidation is directed at its officials and candidates ahead of the municipal polls on March 27.

More than 10,000 people have died in Turkey since 1984 when the separatist Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK) began to fight for Kurdish independence in southeast Turkey.

An Ankara court has accused Mr. Mezarcı of the offence of insulting Ataturk, the leader who founded secular Turkey from the ruins of the religion-based Ottoman empire.

U.S. soldiers shoot 2 Somalis

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — American soldiers shot two Somali men, apparently killing at least one of them, during separate incidents at the military base in the new port of Mogadishu, a U.S. army spokesman said Friday.

Colonel Steve Rausch said an American sentry fired one round Friday afternoon, apparently killing a Somali man in the back of a pickup truck.

He said the pickup sped away, but that the gunman was hit in the head and apparently killed. The Somali did not fire and no American was injured.

At night, another American sentry at the port fired a single round at a Somali who aimed a rifle at the checkpoint. The Somali was hit in the chest and the pickup sped away. It was not known if the Somali was killed.

The sentry post later came under light sniper fire, but no one was injured and the sentries did not return fire, Rausch said.

Under the rules of engagement, the soldiers may fire at anyone who directly threatens them with small arms or at anyone manning a heavy or crew-served weapon.

Col. Rausch said the sentries in both incidents reacted properly under those rules.

U.S. helicopter crashes
A United States navy helicopter has crashed into the sea, 16 kilometres off the coast of Somalia, a U.S. military spokesman said here Saturday.

The military spokesman said that all the four crew members on board the helicopter escaped injury in Friday's crash and had since been rescued by a motorboat sent in by the U.S. military and returned to the U.S. aircraft carrier Ichon.

The court-martial was told that the camera belonged to private Elvin Kyle Brown, 25, who is charged with the second degree murder and torture of Shidane Arone, 16, on the night of March 16, 1993, in the Canadian forces' compound in Belet Huen.

Two other soldiers are shown in the photographs but their identities cannot be revealed by court order.

Agencies appeal for help for Sudan

CAIRO (Agencies) — Five British aid agencies have appealed for urgent international help for the people of southern Sudan to avert what they say is "an impending catastrophe."

Widespread drought as well as renewed fighting in the 11-year-old Sudanese civil war "is pushing tens of thousands of people into starvation," the groups said in a statement.

The Children, Oxfam and three other groups called on governments to increase their aid to Operation Lifeline Sudan, a U.N.-led consortium of relief agencies, and the Sudan Emergency Operations Consortium, which groups church-affiliated programmes.

The groups called on the International Community to step up diplomatic efforts to secure peace or at least to ensure creation of demilitarised zones, to allow delivery of humanitarian aid.

The other groups joining in the appeal were the Catholic Fund for Overseas Development (CAFOD), Christian Aid and World Vision-UK.

The war pits the north against the south.

Southern Sudan has been in rebellion for much of the country's 38 years of independence. The current insurrection began 11 years ago this spring, and fighting and famine are estimated to have killed more than one million people.

The United Nations says some two million people are in need of emergency food and medical care this year because of the war and drought. Thousands of southerners reportedly have fled refugee camps to escape renewed fighting.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION
06:00 - 7:30 AM: News in French
07:00 - 8:00 AM: News in Arabic
08:00 - 9:00 AM: The End Of A Brave Man
09:00 - 10:00 AM: You Bet Your Life
10:30 - 11:30 AM: Out Of The Past
12:00 - 1:00 PM: Island Son

PRAYER TIMES
05:50 - Sunrise
12:00 - Noon
16:30 - Sunset
18:20 - Maghrib
19:20 - Isha

CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetish.
Tel. 62341
St. Joseph's Church, Tel. 62490
St. George's Church, Tel. 62340
St. Michael's Church, Tel. 62340

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 62341
Anglican Church Tel. 62051, Tel. 62843
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 77131
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 77521
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Assyrian International Church Tel. 62526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 82432
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 68195
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be sunny and warm with southerly moderate winds. In Amman, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.
Min./Max. temp. 4 / 19
Agaba 10 / 26
Deserts Zero / 19
Jordan Valley 12 / 24
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 20, Agaba 27 Humidity readings: Amman 12 per cent, Agaba 18 per cent.

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 192 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 75121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Police Complaints 605900
First Aiders 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Complaints (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 661101
Abdullah Telephone Repairs 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Jordan Electricity Authority 680100
Electric Power 815615
Company 636381
RF Flight Information 08-53200

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad 846070
Dr. Bassim Qudumi 648633
Dr. Fakhri Tayeh 885880
Dr. Salim Al Daboubi 776751
Fina pharmacy 661912
Fardous pharmacy 783336
Al Asana pharmacy 637055
Naioukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmesani pharmacy 637660
Naioukh pharmacy 623672
Najih pharmacy 147632
IRBID:
Dr. Ali Al Shuqairi 246140
Alquds pharmacy (-)
ZARQA:
Dr. Ghassan Al Fajih 906130
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

HOSPITALS
Queen Alia Int'l. Airport... 08-53200
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre... 813813/32
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn... 64241/2
Jabal Amman Maternity... 642362
Malhas, J. Amman... 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani... 664171/4
Shmeisani Hospital... 669131
University Hospital... 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital... 66727/9
The Islamic, Abdali... 666127/77
Al-Ahli, Abdali... 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen... 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh... 775111/26
Army, Marika... 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital... 802240/50
Amal Hospital... 674155
ZARQA:
Zarga Govt. Hospital... (09)983323
Zarga National Hospital... (09)983660
Ibn Sina Hospital... (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital... (09)990990
IBBID:
Princess Basma Hospital... (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital... (02)272775
Ibn Ali Nafes Hospital... (02)247101
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital... (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.
ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
05:15 ... Bangkok (RJ)
06:00 ... Agaba (RJ)
06:00 ... Beirut (RJ)
06:30 ... Rome (RJ)
10:30 ... Frankfurt (RJ)
10:30 ... Agaba, Vienna (RJ)
10:30 ... Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00 ... Athens (RJ)
12:45 ... Cairo (RJ)
13:15 ... Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
16:00 ... Agaba (RJ)
16:00 ... Beirut (RJ)
16:45 ... New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:45 ... Cairo (RJ)
17:25 ... Paris, Brussels (RJ)
17:50 ... Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
18:30 ... Athens (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
11:00 ... Damascus (AZ)
12:25 ... Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
14:25 ... Moscow (RU)
19:40 ... Larnaca (CY)
19:40 ... Beirut (ME)
20:05 ... Cairo (MS)
20:05 ... Istanbul (TA)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
05:30 ... Agaba (RJ)
06:00 ... Beirut (RJ)
06:30 ... Rome (RJ)
10:30 ... Frankfurt (RJ)
10:30 ... Agaba, Vienna (RJ)
10:30 ... Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00 ... Athens (RJ)
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16:00 ... Agaba (RJ)
16:00 ... Beirut (RJ)
16:45 ... New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:45 ... Cairo (RJ)
17:25 ... Paris, Brussels (RJ)
17:50 ... Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
18:30 ... Athens (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
12:10 ... Rome (AZ)
12:30 ... Doha, Bahrain (GF)
14:25 ... Moscow (RU)
19:40 ... Larnaca (CY)
19:40 ... Beirut (ME)
20:05 ... Cairo (MS)
20:05 ... Istanbul (TA)

MARKET PRICES
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 550/650
Banana (Mukammur) 600
Banana (small) 700/800
Carrot 200/220
Cauliflower 140/180
Clementine 260/280
Cucumbers (large) 180/220
Cucumbers (small) 380/420
Eggplant 170/180
Garlic 220/230
Grape Fruit 220/230
Green beans 1200/1300
Lemon 180/190
Marrow (large) 180/220
Marrow (small) 300/320
Olives (green) 700/800
Orange 420/480
Onion (dry) 350/380
Onion (green) 220/250
Pepper (hot) 380/420
Pepper (sweet) 340/360
Potato 250/280
Radish 120/140
Spinach 220/250
String beans 800/850

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
12:10 ... Rome (AZ)
12:30 ... Doha, Bahrain (GF)
14:25 ... Moscow (RU)
19:40 ... Larnaca (CY)
19:40 ... Beirut (ME)
20:05 ... Cairo (MS)
20:05 ... Istanbul (TA)

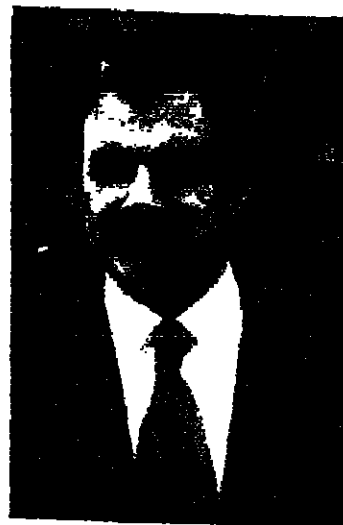
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Orange 420/480
Onion (dry) 350/380
Onion (green) 220/250
Pepper (hot) 380/420
Pepper (sweet) 340/360
Potato 250/280
Radish 120/140
Spinach 220/250
String beans 800/850

Tourism officials to head for Italy

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Mohammad Adwan is due to pay an official visit to Italy today at the head of a Jordanian delegation, according to recent announcement. The visit came at the invitation of the Italian government.

Dr. Adwan who will be accompanied on the visit by representatives of various tourism organisations and ministry officials, is expected to hold talks with government officials on promoting bilateral cooperation in tourism, training of Jordanian cadres employed in the industry and in matters related to archaeology and archaeological excavations in the Kingdom, the announcement said.

Also, prospects for increasing the volume of Italian government technical assistance to Jordan in tourism-related fields and in financing the school of mosaics in Madaba and the restoration of the ancient sites of Jerash, will be discussed, the announcement added.



Mohammad Adwan

During the visit, Dr. Adwan will formally open the Jordanian pavilion at the International Tourism Expo to open in Milan on Feb. 23.

Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national air carrier, will represent Jordan at the event with displays and activities aimed at orienting visitors to the expo

on the Kingdom's tourist attractions.

RJ is cooperating in the regard with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities as well as with various tourism organisations and the Jordanian Popular Committee for Promoting Tourism in Jordan (JPCPTJ).

RJ said it plans to distribute brochures about Jordan in Italian and will hold slide and documentary film shows depicting the main touristic features in the Kingdom.

The airline started operating flights between Amman and Rome in 1965. Italy is considered one of the main European countries to organise tourist group trips to the Kingdom, RJ said in a statement.

Tayseer Ammari, the president of the Popular Committee for Promoting Tourism in Jordan, is expected to leave Sunday for Milan to attend the four-day expo.

He said that he would deliver lectures about Jordan's main touristic attractions and archaeological sites.

Jordan, Egypt start talks to increase trade volume

AMMAN (J.T.) — A group of experts comprising the ministries of trade and industry in Jordan and Egypt Saturday opened a two-day meeting in Amman to discuss prospects for increasing the volume of trade between their countries in implementation of bilateral trade agreements.

Secretary General of the Ministry of Trade and Industry Marwan Awad who led the Jordanian side to the meeting, told the Jordan Times that talks are expected to culminate with the signing of a new protocol for the implementation of the 1992 Egyptian-Jordanian Trade Agreement.

The executive protocol, he said, is aimed at boosting trade exchanges in line with objectives set by the Higher Jordanian-Egyptian Joint Committee.

According to Mr. Awad, the results of the current meeting

will be submitted to minister Rima Khalaf and her Egyptian counterpart Mohammad Mahmoud Mohammad at their meeting in Amman on Tuesday.

Mr. Awad and the leader of the Egyptian team, Fakhredin Abdul Izz, underlined the need to promote economic and trade cooperation.

According to Mr. Awad, the outcome of the experts meeting, together with the minister's meeting on Tuesday, will be on the agenda of the higher joint committee meeting scheduled for March 19.

Mr. Awad said that in 1993 Egypt sold Jordan JD 35 million worth of national products and imported JD 5 million worth of Jordanian goods.

He said that the new protocol is designed to increase goods exchanges in a bid to adjust the balance of trade.



Experts from the ministries of trade and industry of Jordan and Egypt Saturday meet in Amman (Petra photo)

NEWS IN BRIEF

King confers medal on Korean envoy

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday conferred Al Istiqal Medal of the First Order on outgoing South Korean Ambassador to Jordan Hahn-Choon Lee on the occasion of the end of his tour of duty in the Kingdom. The Korean envoy was presented with the medal by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan at an iftar banquet held in Mr. Lee's honour (see related story).

Queen to attend tree planting event

AMMAN (Petra) — A tree-planting ceremony, to be attended by Her Majesty Queen Noor, will be held at the Queen Noor Forest on Yajouz Road Monday. School students and representatives of various organisations will take part in the greening ceremony.

Cabinet approves draft courts inspection rule

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Saturday approved the final draft of a regulation on courts inspection. Also Saturday, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali issued an official communique requesting ministries and government departments to supply the Foreign Ministry with the minutes of deliberations and meetings held during visits by foreign ambassadors and official delegations. The decision aims to document these meetings and follow up the implementation of decisions taken at them, said the communique.

Minister meets with U.S. fodder official

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Supply Radhi Ibrahim Saturday received the chairman of the American Fodder Board and reviewed with him

Jordanian-U.S. relations, particularly Jordan's imports of U.S. fodder. Mr. Ibrahim underlined to the American visitor the need for the U.S. to continue its exports of animal feed to Jordan in accordance with the required specifications and standards. He said fodder quantities consumed in Jordan have been on the rise in view of the increase in Jordan's livestock and the demand for meat.

Vocational training department to review proposals

AMMAN (Petra) — The Vocational Training Department at the Ministry of Education Wednesday will start a series of meetings by directors of vocational schools in Jordan to discuss issues impeding the implementation of vocational training programmes, according to department director Ali Nasrallah. He said that among the topics to be discussed is raising the efficiency and skill of instructors and the maintenance of equipment and machinery used in the vocational training centres.

NAF gives needy JD 14,615 in '93

JERASH (Petra) — The National Aid Fund (NAF), in the Jerash district gave JD 14,615 to 477 needy families in monthly pay last year, according to department director Shaban Al Kayed. The NAF also allocated JD 68,238 to finance the rehabilitation of 69 families through income generating projects.

Abstract art exhibit opens

IRBID (Petra) — Yarmouk University President Marwan Kamal Saturday opened a plastic art exhibition by Jordanian artist Khalil Al Kofahi at the university's Massiya Hall. The five-day exhibition includes 29 abstract paintings depicting Jordanian heritage and natural sites.

CULINARY EXCELLENCE: Royal Jordanian

(RJ) Catering Division won the Bronze Medal in the International Flight Catering Association (IFCA) 1993 competition involving 50 international airlines. RJ Assistant Vice-President for Catering Youssef Qndri received the 1993 Mercury Award on behalf of the airline at a special ceremony held in Geneva. The competition was held in late January and winners of the various awards were announced on Feb. 11. The national air carrier's catering division produces more than 8,000 meals daily during the summer and 4,000 during winter, providing catering services to passengers on RJ flights in addition to flights operated by 17 Arab and foreign airlines out of Amman. RJ won a similar medal during an international competition held in New York last year.



Royal Jordanian Catering

Yarmouk president meets with dialogue club

IRBID (Petra) — Yarmouk University President Marwan Kamal Saturday met with members of the Administrative Committee of the university Dialogue and Thought Club. Dr. Kamal stressed at the meeting that the university encourages organising democratic dialogues and discussions among its students as well as between students and the university administration. The university president emphasised the importance of the club's role in enhancing understanding between students. The university, he said, will support the activities of the club to achieve the learning institution's educational goals.

Tomato processing plant to go up in Mafrq

AMMAN (Petra) — A private Jordanian firm has begun preparations for the establishment of a JD 6 million tomato processing plant in Mafrq Governorate. Project Director Thabet Jaradat said the factory, the first such private firm in the Kingdom, will be implemented by mid-July by an Italian company. The plant will be built on

500 dunums at the Sabha area and be ready to process this summer's tomato harvest surplus, said Mr. Jaradat. He said the Ministry of Agriculture has drilled an artesian well on the site to provide the required amounts of water; in exchange the plant will provide the ministry with treated waste water for local irrigation purposes and the residue product or

pulp for animal feed. Jordan has two other government-run tomato-processing plants in the Ghor Safi region in the south and in Al Arda in the Jordan Valley. Mafrq Governorate farmers have repeatedly demanded that a plant be set up in their region to make use of the surplus tomato harvest.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Photo exhibition by artist Latifa Yousef at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of medical herbs at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by Jordanian artists at the Royal Cultural Centre (7:00 p.m.-midnight).
- ★ Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre (7:00 p.m.-midnight).
- ★ Book exhibition at the Jordan Women University.
- ★ Wood carving exhibition by artist Samer Oussama at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art and photo exhibition by several Arab artists at the Balqa Art Gallery in Fubais (Tel. 720902).
- ★ Exhibition by Lebanese artist Hussein Madi at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation. Also showing the "permanent" exhibition of 54 Arab contemporary artists. (Tel. 643251/2)
- ★ Art exhibition by several Iraqi and Jordanian artists at Orfali Art Gallery (Tel. 826932).

DRAMA

- ★ Drama in Arabic entitled "Hamlet Crucified Again" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

Outgoing Korean envoy reflects on his Jordan experience

Bu Ica Wabbek
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Republic of Korea, is a country that in some way can be considered as being similar to Jordan: the same excellent quality of human resources and limited natural resources. Such is one description Korean Ambassador to Jordan Hahn-Choon Lee gave his country in an interview at the end of his tour of duty in the Kingdom. South Korea, for a year now under the civilian administration of President Kim Young Sam (after 32 years of military rule), is a fast-developing and prospering country whose industrial and economic growth make it an almost developed nation. This and the vast experience of the diplomat who prides himself with being of "the King's (Hussein) age" made the soft-spoken, easy-smiling ambassador volunteer some advice that would help Jordan develop its economy.

"We also relied on foreign capital. We put great effort to invite foreign investors to compensate for the lack of capital. To attract them we provided industrial estates, infrastructure and (had) strong promotional activity. Now we achieved a good degree of economic development," said Mr. Lee who mentioned that he arrived in Jordan during the "difficult circumstances following the Gulf war" and saw it overcome most of these difficulties.

"But not enough is done there where you have so much potential," added the ambassador referring to the tourism industry that could, in his view, become a major source of capital income. "Jordan has a very good potential for tourism. I found such rich historical and

archaeological resources, but frankly speaking, I don't think you have invested enough to attract foreign tourists."

Obviously a pet idea of Mr. Lee's that could help the Kingdom prosper, he genuinely seems to care about the prospect of a strong tourism industry promoted worldwide and bilaterally.

"Because of lack of resources we adopted an outwards oriented strategy. We put emphasis on developing export-oriented industries. We had no capital, no raw materials; we imported raw material and parts and manufactured, assembled and sold. It also increased employment," said Mr. Lee.

"Jordan should put more emphasis on promoting the touristic sites. Tourism is beneficial to people. And you do not need many other resources," he said, adding that Korea could be a good market as Korean Christians are interested in this area, in the holy places.

Proof is that Korean Airlines had extended its route to Cairo as many visitors are interested and, according to the ambassador, it is a booming industry.

"If you have enough promotional creativity, you can attract people to such rare or unique places as the Dead Sea, the Ma'in spa or Wadi Rum. More investment in those touristic facilities and more promotion in a potential tourist market, like Korea for example, are needed," said Mr. Lee.

At his first posting in the area, Mr. Lee seems to have developed a real liking for the country and the people. If when he first arrived here Jordan he found he "was having a difficult position," the ambassador now shows surprise at the Kingdom's resilience.

"I was happy to witness

remarkable progress in economic stabilisation and democratisation of domestic policies, not to forget the important Middle East peace process which started after I arrived here and which I spend most of my office hours following. I am looking forward to peace in this region."

Diplomatic relations with Korea started in 1962 and the Korean embassy in Jordan was opened in 1975.



Hahn-Choon Lee

Cooperation has picked up and is multifaceted, covering trade, culture and education, tourism, economy and natural resources exploration. Since 1977, aid to Jordan in the form of grants and soft loans has reached \$6,890,000. It included commodities, water tanks and equipment for vocational training.

In 1992, after the Gulf War, Korea provided the Kingdom with a \$10 million soft loan. It is being used for the Wadi Seer waste water treatment plant where a local contractor was awarded the execution of the project and Korea provides technology

and engineering consultancy. Since His Majesty King Hussein visited Korea in 1983 "our relations became closer and closer in many fields," said Mr. Lee.

The balance of trade, so far in favour of Korea, last year stood at \$100 million, with Korea importing phosphate and potash and Jordan importing electronics, electric appliances and car tyres.

One important project benefiting Jordan is the pro-

duction of consumer electronic goods for which the Kingdom obtained the manufacturing licence. Gold Star and Samsung are well-known trademarks in the Kingdom which "are doing very good business under technical cooperation with Korean companies. This promotes industries in Jordan, helping it get high technology in electronics while, at the same time, increases employment and upgrades the standard of manufacturing capability," according to the ambassador.

The name that sounds a ring to many Jordanians, Hanbo, is a company with

experience in the Kingdom where it has conducted several large projects, especially in irrigation and dams.

"Now they are executing an irrigation project in the Jordan Valley, which will contribute to increasing agricultural production," said Mr. Lee.

Hanbo is also interested in exploration of underground natural resources in Jordan, like oil and copper. But so far it has met with little success in this area.

In culture and education, Korea signed a cooperation agreement with Jordan providing for collaboration in academia, sports and tourism.

Korean artists participated last year in the Jerash Festival, instructors in the kwan do have been sent to the Kingdom, and sports equipment is sometimes donated.

In the academic field, the ambassador and President of the University of Jordan Fawzi Gharabeh have worked towards organising symposia and seminars "on many topics regarding our relation."

In 1992 the Korean government, in cooperation the University of Jordan Centre for Strategic Studies, invited five Jordanian professors to Hankuk University in Seoul for seminars. "It was very successful and well publicised in Korea," according to Mr. Lee.

Jordan reciprocated by inviting four Korean professors to the Kingdom late last year. There is also a Jordanian-Korean Friendship Association headed by Minister of Finance Sami Gammon. It was preceded by a parliamentary friendship association in 1991, but now, with both parliaments changed, "they have to renew their relationship."

Currently 10 Korean students study Arabic at Jor-

dan's public universities, two for the doctorate degree, but only one Jordanian student studies in Seoul.

"More contacts between the two countries are needed to further understand each other as so far, they (the two peoples) are not quite familiar with the other side," said Mr. Lee.

"You have thousands of years of history Jordan needs promotion that can earn it valuable foreign exchange to help the country accumulate capital," added the ambassador, referring again to tourism.

Leaving Jordan "with mixed feelings," the ambassador said he was sad to leave, but glad to see his country after over six years abroad.

"I enjoyed my tour-of-duty here. I am impressed by His Majesty's wisdom of leadership," said Mr. Lee who said he was moved by the outpouring of love the Jordanians showed their King a year ago, after he had returned from surgery abroad. "He is a man greatly loved and charismatic."

As for the people, they are "friendly, cooperative, quite liberal; they speak English so I did not have difficulty communicating with them, and only advantages during my service," said the ambassador, adding that he hoped to come back one day as a visitor, if the chance presents itself.

"The weather is beautiful, not my expectation before coming here where I was expecting heat, desert, barren land. I had seen the chance to explain that Jordan is different," the ambassador, imbued with Asian wisdom, said, imparting to the Jordan Times a Korean proverb that strengthens his belief: "What you see once is better than what you hear a hundred times."

Jordan Times

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A happy Yemen again

IN RECOGNITION of the pivotal role that His Majesty King Hussein has played to resolve the Yemeni crisis that erupted almost a year ago between Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Vice President Ali Salem Al Beidh, and their respective constituencies, the Yemeni leaders will today sign, here in Amman, a reconciliation and reform accord. The agreement is expected to end the political crisis that beleaguered that Arab country and threatened to undermine its unity which was painstakingly struck between the north and south in May of 1990.

After more than three hundred years of separation between the two parts of the one country, reunion was not an easy feat to accomplish.

Yet the fact that President Saleh's General People's Congress (GPC) and Vice President Beidh's Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) have refused to cut off the umbilical cord between their respective peoples inspite of the formidable odds and continued to pursue national reconciliation is vivid proof that the Yemeni unity is stronger and more durable than sceptics have bet on.

King Hussein was among the first Arab leaders to sense the danger that was looming in the horizon in Yemen, a country so dear to Jordanian hearts, and His Majesty spared no effort to come forward for the difficult job. But it was only natural for Jordan to step in since the stakes in the Yemeni crisis were indeed high for the rest of the Arab countries which still yearn for unity and salvation. Driven by the ideals of the Great Arab Revolt and fearful of the implications of a national disaster in the southern tip of the Arabian peninsula, the King moved expeditiously and effectively to help resolve the crisis and then to assist in the tortuous healing process that lay ahead.

Other Arab leaders, most notably Sultan Qaboos of Oman, were also invited to take part in today's ceremony in recognition of their critical mediation efforts between the two Yemeni sides. But, having said this, Jordanians want to see credit go where it is due, just as much as they want to see responsibility for the future placed on the right shoulders. First and foremost, the credit and responsibility must lie with the Yemeni leaders themselves, for they are ultimately accountable to their people and history. Yemenis, in the north and south, want to see a consolidation of the reconciliation process on the ground, and appear willing to take active part in new efforts aimed at ensuring for their country success and prosperity.

Democratic institutions thus become a necessary channel for putting into effect any unity scheme. As contemporary history, especially in the Arab World, reveals, there are no shortcuts to lofty ideals and goals.

The Yemeni experience has shown that forging unity is no small achievement; it requires solid structures built on the foundation of democratic principles. We are sure that the Yemeni leadership has drawn the right lessons from its recent painful experiences and will take the Yemenis to where they all want to be: united, proud and prosperous. Jordan can only derive strength from a Yemen that is as much happy now as it was in the old days.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

COMMENTING ON Sunday's meeting in Amman by the Yemeni leaders who will sign a reconciliation document in Amman, Al Dustour daily said the document is expected to crown successful Jordanian mediation efforts which have aimed at protecting unity between the two parts of Yemen. By signing the document the Yemeni leaders are expressing their keenness on and their adherence to their unity forged in 1990, said the daily. Jordan's efforts, said the paper, continue to seek solidarity among the Arabs amid continued attempts on the part of the common enemies to further dismember the Arab Nation and to render the Arabs weak in the face of the challenges facing them. The Jordanian people who are firmly behind their Hashemite leadership in its quest to preserve Arab unity, call on the Yemeni brothers to put into force their determination towards preserving the unity of their country and appeal to them to honour the provisions of this document and to protect Yemeni Arab interests and heritage and the aspiration of the Arab masses, said the paper. Jordanian people, the paper added, seek no personal glory but strive to fend off the onslaught of the forces of evil that work in the dark against the interests of the Arab Nation. It is hoped, added the paper, that the signing of the document in this holy month would further bolster the unity of Arab ranks in general and those of the Yemeni people in particular.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour urged the health authorities to raise the standard of medical services offered to the inhabitants of the remote areas of Jordan. Expanding and improving the quality of these services can partly be achieved through making available the required medication in sufficient amounts at all health centres and hospitals, said Mohammad Daoud. There is no doubt that the health centres are facing increased demand for services, partly due to the return of thousands of expatriates to Jordan and partly due to the increased number of patients who turn away from private clinics as a result of the soaring cost of medical services, said the writer. He said the health ministry ought to conduct a general survey of the needs of patients in all governorates before implementing the projected national health insurance plan to ensure good level medical services for all, with special attention to the remote regions which still suffer from rather poor services.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

What are the Arabs and Israelis battling about?

THE ECONOMIC aspect of any issue has the priority in the minds of all decision makers of the world today. Peoples and states struggle and compete for their economic interests before and above ideological considerations.

However, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the five Arab-Israeli wars waged during the last 45 years, and the current peace process are not fundamentally about economic issues. The objectives were always national and political in the first place.

Israel, for example, especially during the Likud administration turned down an American suggestion to remove the Arab boycott in return for the suspension of Jewish settlement in the occupied territories. Israel also rejected \$10 billion worth of American guarantees to finance housing for the Soviet Jews immigrants if the condition was an undertaking not to build or expand settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel simply did not give priority to economic considerations over its ideological claims and expansionary designs.

On the Arab side, there is no economic temptation that is good enough as a price for giving up sovereignty over Jerusalem, Gaza or Bethlehem. There is no Arab leader who is ready to sign a concession to Israel giving up political sovereignty for any price you can name. Likewise, not one Arab government dares to contemplate lifting Arab economic boycott or accepting normalisation of economic and trade relations before an acceptable political and national settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict, even if such government found out that lifting the boycott is economically beneficial to its own country's economy.

The conflict is not essentially over markets or economic benefits. It is over the land and sovereignty. The solution, therefore, may not come about through vague promises of

economic prosperity and higher standards of living. The solution may come about by recovering national rights. Any political and or national concessions for economic rewards are so costly politically no Arab leader can make.

This does not mean that the economic dimensions of the Arab-Israeli dispute or peace are not important, or that markets are irrelevant. On the contrary, these dimensions are obviously important, even crucial, but not decisive. They have no precedence over the national dimensions.

Since the end of the cold war, we cannot find many disputes in the world which could not be resolved through exchanged economic concessions, but the so-called Middle East crisis is unique in this respect. The economic factors and consequences are very important but they take a second place and cannot by-pass national factors.

Lifting the Arab boycott against Israel, whether the primary or the secondary one could not be negotiated by economists on pure economic grounds. It may be established that Arab economies may not be harmed by lifting the boycott. It is not even ruled out that certain Arab economies may benefit from an atmosphere of normalisation of economic relations with Israel, especially in such sectors as tourism, transport and foreign investments. But all this is not in itself sufficient to make the move.

The Arab economic boycott of Israel was not enforced since 1951 as a measure of trade protection. It is simply meant to isolate Israel and punish the Israeli aggression and the occupation of Arab lands by force. The boycott can be lifted as soon as its justification disappear and when Israel agrees to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and recognise the national rights of the Palestinian people.

By Anton Ferreira
Reuters

JOHANNESBURG — In less than three months the African National Congress (ANC) will almost certainly have to put aside rebellion to become the South African establishment. There are doubts over how smoothly it will make the change.

ANC leader Nelson Mandela has expressed concern at how the Liberation Movement, most of its experience in military or economic sabotage, will cope with the responsibilities of government.

"We are the product of the resistance movement in which our task was to oppose everything the government said," Mr. Mandela told white businessmen on a vote catching tour.

"Now we are required to be up-front in addressing the problems of South Africa. But we are still suffering from this background of ours, sometimes opposing what the government says even if it is in the interests of the whole country."

The main problems the ANC will face if it takes power in elections at the end of April — it is expected to win about two-thirds of the vote — are quelling township violence, achieving economic growth and satisfying the expectations of its followers in impoverished shantytowns.

Some of the difficulties are of its own creation: A campaign in the 1980s to make the country ungovernable has left a legacy of anarchy in many black townships. Rates go unpaid, children boycott their schools.

One ANC official, who did not want to be identified, said the party leadership was poles apart from the broad mass of supporters on several issues, such as capital punishment. "The leaders stand for a complete halt to executions, but people in the townships see nothing wrong with necklacing wrongdoers with burning tyres," the official said.

"And what the leadership might see as corruption, people in the townships see as obtaining the things they have long been denied and are now entitled to."



A PEACEFUL SOCIETY: ANC leader Nelson Mandela calls on South Africans to pledge themselves to peace as the road for success (AFP photo)

The difficult challenge ANC faces tricky switch from rebellion to rule

In tackling political violence, which has killed 18,000 people since fighting broke out between the ANC and the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party in 1984, Mr. Mandela will find it more difficult to put the blame on President F.W. de Klerk, as he does now.

"A peace campaign with nice words and shirts emblazoned with doves will simply not be enough," wrote Max du Preez, editor of the independent Vrye Weekblad weekly. "Tough action will be needed, people will have to be shot and thrown in jail. Will an ANC-dominated government have the will or ability to do so?"

Mr. du Preez said South Africa's nascent democracy would come under serious pressure if the new government failed to bring immediate hope of a better life for millions of unemployed blacks in the townships.

The South African Sunday Times said Communists in the

ANC were "trying with genuine bewilderment to adapt, their 19th century prejudices to the 21st century world of global markets, tidal capital flows, mobile skills and evanescent investments."

"They are, we suspect, scared out of their wits," the paper said. It described the ANC's ambitious reconstruction programme and election manifesto as "well-meaning babble."

Political analyst Wim Booysse said the ANC was far better placed to make a graceful transition than opposition groups had been in neighbouring Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

"The transition to liberation has not been as abrupt in South Africa. The ANC has had time to hold policy conferences and circulate its ideas," said Mr. Booysse, policy analyst at the Northern Transvaal Chamber of Industries.

"It is a major advantage for the ANC that they have been

part of the transition process for at least the last two years. They have picked up a lot of experience during the constitutional negotiations and have depth in leadership."

But Mr. du Preez said the ANC depended too much on Mr. Mandela, 75, for leadership.

"Even to his opponents he has become a larger than life symbol of the new order. He represents the hope that black majority rule in South Africa will not become another Africa nightmare," Mr. du Preez said.

"No one dare expect so much of one man, especially one who is so old."

Mr. du Preez predicted that problems would arise from the form of the administration to take office after the April election, a government of national unity in which each party with more than five per cent of the vote will be represented.

"It will be a coalition of enemies... the struggle will be hard, bitter and dirty," he said.

The Bosnian tragedy Long-term strategy needed to end the bloodshed

By Richard Burt
and
Richard Perle

WASHINGTON — The apparent willingness of the United States and its closest allies to use air strikes in Bosnia is long overdue.

But the strategic purpose of air strikes is at least as important an issue as whether they take place at all.

It will be a travesty if the Western allies, having finally taken action in Bosnia, end the siege of Sarajevo in order to force Bosnian concessions in the deadlocked Geneva negotiations.

Air strikes, especially televised ones, would be dramatic. They would signal an end to the feeble Western policy of standing aside while newly independent Bosnia, a member of the United Nations, is dismembered and its civilians massacred.

But while forcing the withdrawal of the Serbian guns is a beginning, Western intervention must not stop there. An end to the siege must not form the basis for renewed demands from U.N. negotiators that Bosnia accept a humiliating — and unstable — political settlement.

A plan under which the Muslims, who have for centuries lived peacefully in a multiethnic society, are herded into "ethnically cleansed" enclaves surrounded by the Serbian and Croatian armies that drove them there is unacceptable.

Now that the West appears ready to act, what is needed — and what has been missing all along — is a well-defined strategy for achieving a stable peace in the Balkans.

U.S. President Bill Clinton, who is loath to act without the approval of Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, has said that any use of force would be intended to further the U.N.'s diplomatic strategy.

But that strategy, which would reward aggression by legitimising the conquest of Bosnian territory by Serbian and Croatian troops, can only set the stage for endless, chronic violence in the region.

So what should U.S. policy be? And what military actions can and should be taken to support it? The starting point must be to recognise that while the former Yugoslavia is rife with ethnic and religious animosities, the cause of the war there is Serbian and Croatian aggression against Bosnia — an aggression made more poignant and dangerous by its attacks on innocent civilians.

This reality suggests the core of a new Western policy: First, end the siege of Sarajevo, then shape a balance of power in Bosnia more favourable to a fair and lasting settlement.

We should move immediately to revise the U.N. embargo that has kept the Bosnian Muslims outgunned and under siege. With Bosnia excluded from the embargo, the United States and others should supply essential arms to the Bosnian government. Then Bosnian troops would have a decent chance of achieving defensible borders.

Second, we should plan to use NATO air power not

only against tactical targets in Bosnia, like the artillery positions surrounding Sarajevo, but also against strategic targets in Serbia itself.

Precise attacks by advanced weapons could cripple air bases and military logistics centres, or Belgrade's power supply, while posing little threat to civilians.

Three arguments against this more ambitious course stand out.

One is that there is no vital U.S. interest that would justify the risk of intervention. But this view ignores the damage that has been done to the credibility of the United States and the NATO allies after two years of indecision and idle threats.

The spectacle of free-world leaders maneuvering to avoid embarrassment by keeping Bosnia off the agenda of last month's NATO summit meeting can only encourage aggressors in the former Soviet bloc. If NATO proves incapable of acting with resolve, it will soon become irrelevant in the post-cold war world.

A second argument is that air strikes and intensified fighting would jeopardise the safety of U.N. peacekeeping forces on the ground.

But if the presence of U.N. troops becomes a reason for allowing the slaughter of the Bosnian Muslims to continue, it would be better to pull them out: Bosnia needs to be able to defend itself, not simply be provided with food and water while it is being destroyed.

A third argument against military intervention is that the United States will find itself drawn into an unpredictable adventure leading inevitably to American casualties.

But there is no reason why air strikes against precise targets should be followed by the introduction of American ground forces.

Ultimately the fate of Bosnia lies in the hands of the Bosnians. While we Americans should help them with arms and air power, we need not, and should not, intervene on the ground.

The use of military power always entails uncertainties. It is idle and dangerous to believe that military options make sense only where the results can be known, and the risks eliminated, in advance.

But Mr. Clinton can count on broad support for a decisive, robust policy, for despite the risks, left and right alike have been urging him to take forceful action.

Treading carefully, Defence Secretary William Perry insists that we think about "Acts II and III" before we embark on "Act I."

But Acts I and II, more than two years of killing, have already been played. And unless we change course now, Act III will prove the Bosnian drama is not history but tragedy.

Mr. Burt, a partner at McKinsey & Co., was an assistant secretary of state in the U.S. from 1983 to 1985. Mr. Perle, an American Enterprise Institute fellow, was an assistant secretary of defence from 1981 to 1987. The article is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune.

LETTERS

What about universities?

To the Editor:

Some of my colleagues and I who are mostly university students (particularly those who study English language and literature) admonish the Jordan Times for its apparent negligence of our universities' activities and issues. There are many issues at our universities that need to be written about and addressed; a lot of news, activities, questions and innovations. Many students want to express themselves; a great many of them want to write and tackle problems: social, political, literary and educational problems. So many debatable opinions can be expressed through our lovely Jordan Times.

But what is lacking is simply a page or half a page, at least once a week, devoted by the paper of universities news.

Many professors and students are willing to contribute articles to the newspaper. Just give us the chance and I am sure that you would find what pleases you and what encourages us. Such proposal, if happened to be carried out, would open the channels of communication between professors and students at our universities on the one hand, and between both the professors and students and society on the other.

Qusai Anwar Al Thebyan,
Yarmouk University,
Irbid.

Smugglers run booming India-Bangladesh trade

By Anis Ahmed
Reuters

JAIPURHAT, Bangladesh — Smuggling across the India-Bangladesh border dwarfs official trade between the two countries, Commerce Ministry officials say, and according to traders, it includes gold, women and drugs.

In 1992-93 (July-June), Bangladesh exported goods worth less than 10 million to India against imports of 342 million, the ministry said.

But officials there say the figures ignore tens of millions of dollars' worth of smuggled goods that escape official records and the customs service.

Because of a shortage of checkpoints and payoffs to security men, residents say even Indian bulls can be driven into Bangladesh without duty being paid.

Although considered sacred in Hindu India, the animals are eagerly consumed as food in Muslim Bangladesh.

Other commodities smuggled in from India include clothes, bicycles, spare parts, sugar, salt, spices, pesticides, polythene, alcohol and hard drugs, security officials said.

The return traffic includes more expensive items, such as gold, electronics, counterfeit clothing and accessories, colour film — and women and children.

"Smuggling (of commodities and cattle) is everybody's business. But trafficking (of women and children) is a trade of the rich and powerful," said a journalist living along Bangladesh's northern border.

Police officer Makfubar Rahman, a former newspaper reporter, said "Yes, I have no hesitation in confirming that smuggling is extensive here. Items traded include drugs and humans."

Dinajpur police arrested nearly 100 men, women and children being smuggled to India in December without valid travel documents.

"More than half of them are

women and children," police officer Fazlul Haq said. He said police also arrested 39 Burmese Rohingya Muslims who fled from refugee camps in southeastern Bangladesh, trying to reach a third country.

Police said the women mostly ended up in brothels in India and Pakistan but were uncertain about the children's fate. They said reports sometimes came in across the border that Bangladeshi children were held in safe houses and used for supplying kidneys, hearts and other organs to hospitals.

"We don't have a definite proof, but feel that such reports may not be totally baseless," one police officer said.

"The women go to brothels, maybe the men work as bonded labourers, but what happens to the children? They are no good for any work. Then why should someone feed them for nothing?" he asked.

Members of the paramilitary Bangladesh rifles often raid smugglers' dens along the border and seize cattle and commodities but rarely arrest a big-time smuggler, rifles major Fazal Kadir admitted.

"We are quite active but, you know, smuggling is a business that never stops," he said at his operations headquarters at Dinajpur, 450 km (280 miles) from the capital.

"The big fish always remain behind the scene," he said. His deputy, Major Mahfuz, displayed a bottle, one of hundreds seized every week, of an Indian-made cough syrup popular with drug addicts.

"Alcohol, heroin and opium are available to selected buyers," he said.

The income from smuggling is fabulous, according to local journalist Shilu Rahman.

One smuggler in Dinajpur has built a four-storey hotel, bought about 300 acres of crop land and set up half a dozen businesses in just 10 or 15 years, he said.

By Peter Smerdon

Reuters

MOGADISHU — He landed a Gung-Ho warrior to save Somalia from warlords looting food aid. He leaves a year later for home next month, bitter and troubled by what he saw.

The United Nations operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) set conditions for a journalist to interview its peacemaker. He could speak candidly but had to be identified only as a U.N. military official. His country, rank and job were not allowed to be given.

Looking back uncomfortably on his year in a land he hardly knew before arriving, he says he has nightmares about the Somalia experience.

The security council has finally scaled back its grandiose drive for aggressive peacekeeping. UNOSOM will limp on for a year after the United States and other mainly Western forces pull out by the end of March. But the alarm bells for renewed civil war are already ringing.

The original aim of UNOSOM to push reconciliation and reconstruction was, the official says, the logical next step for this war-shattered Horn of Africa country after the end of the famine, which prompted U.S. intervention.

But then came problems. Warlord Mohamed Farah Aided and his Somali National Alliance (SNA) opposed U.N. intervention.

"There was a (U.N. and U.S.) lack of recognition of what problems there were. Has it been a total failure?... to the SNA people, UNOSOM would have failed whatever happened," he says.

"In that regard conflict was inevitable. It started as a political and propaganda conflict and then became a military one, which was inevitable because the SNA wanted it that way."

"We began taking casualties on June 5 (last year) and took them at the rate of one per day," he says. "The SNA of course took vast numbers of casualties and the military was strained to breaking point."

"But they had the advantage of time. They could protract the conflict... they knew the coalition members couldn't afford politically to take casualties in Somalia. The populations at home weren't prepared to accept casualties for this mission."



A U.N. soldier watches as a Somali man carries a signboard demanding "our rights" (AFP photo)

As the alarm bells ring

U.N. warrior has nightmares about Somalia

He says U.S. forces again miscalculated by thinking they could easily overcome Mr. Aided's 200 rag-tag militiamen, and as the U.N. body kept rising, its will to fight waned.

"We could have captured Aided. A military solution has a cost and when the conflict began it wasn't clear what the cost was," he says and pauses. "It became very clear on October 3."

"We learned the cruelties of war. Compared with the Gulf war this was a real war. It was up front and personal, right in front of your eyes," says the official, who accompanied units in combat.

"In the Gulf war it was watching a TV screen and the

bombs going in. You didn't have to think what happened to the people in the building when it was hit."

"But here, you saw the faces close up of the people in the building. You saw the women and children killed, and the women and children used as human shields. You saw them dragging American bodies through the streets. There was nothing hidden."

"All the ugliness of war was right there slap in your face. And there is a certain ugliness to war... It was much more distasteful in Somalia than any other U.N. action up to now."

"And the SNA knew that. The SNA knew that just to keep killing would unify the world (to pull its U.N. forces

out)."

He has special hatred for Mr. Aided, who for four months evaded a U.N. manhunt featuring wild West-style \$25,000 reward posters for his capture. After 18 U.S. servicemen were killed in a battle on Oct. 3, the United Nations abandoned the search.

"Was the decision to capture Aided flawed? When it was made a full understanding of the consequences was not realised... They certainly had the capability to take casualties among U.S. forces."

"We couldn't overcome them with just firepower," he says.

The U.N. retreated from its ambitious role-model for peacekeeping operations in

world troublespots after U.S. President Bill Clinton ordered a total U.S. withdrawal by March 31 and tried to court Mr. Aided to talk peace.

The official says: "All the propaganda in the world will never erase the fact that Aided is a criminal, a murderer and a warlord. He killed thousands of his own people even before the U.N. arrived here."

"If you ask a Somali about Aided he doesn't say he has built hospitals. He hasn't done a single thing for the people. They know he is a murderer. He got off lightly. And in the end it never mattered that he got away with murder here."

Asked whether he believed the Somalia mission could nev-

er have succeeded, he says everything depends on the U.N. will.

"There will be the potential for battle as long as there are Somali warlords who still don't want to be in Somalia," he says, adding the U.N. is aware of the danger of a SNA-led corporation to control the country.

Asked if without U.S. forces would hit Aided, he says a large attack, he says, they would only die faster.

"The response to this attack would only be political. I don't think that... going to destroy anyone... on our way out. We don't want to kill anyone, any more."

NEWS IN BRIEF

India test-fires ballistic missile

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India on Saturday successfully test-fired for the second time an Indian-made intermediate-range ballistic missile, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported. The missile, known as "Agni" (fire), was fired from a test range in the eastern coastal state of Orissa at 5:45 p.m. (12:15 GMT). The news agency quoted officials as saying that the test "met all its objectives." No further details were available. It was the third test of the 75-tonne rocket after the May 1989 and May 1992 tests. The first test was a success but the second was a failure due to problems during the reentry stage.

Libyan employees must answer to Sharia

TRIPOLI (AFP) — All state employees in Libya will be subject to the country's new Islamic law and may have their hands cut off if found guilty of theft, officials said here Saturday. Special committees will crack down on corruption throughout Libya and ensure the law is implemented. Officials said ministers, judges, ambassadors and ordinary civil servants would have to declare their personal assets when they joined the public sector and when they left it. The new legislation introduced on Thursday will work on an "eye-for-an-eye" principle in cases of premeditated murder. Thieves will have their hands cut off, and men and women caught committing adultery will be flogged.

Lillehammer-bound Iranian arrested

LILLEHAMMER (R) — An Iranian who said he was headed for the Lillehammer games was detained in Oslo with three kilograms of raw opium in his car, officials said here Saturday. A police spokesman said the Iranian, who was not named, was to appeal in court later Saturday and then be placed in investigative custody. The Iranian arrived in Norway on a ferry from Kiel in Germany on Friday and told customs officials who found the drugs during a spot check that he was intended driving to the Olympics.

Kurd refugees hospitalised in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Five Iraqi Kurd refugees on hunger strike for more than a month were rushed to hospital here in critical condition, a Kurdish spokesman here said. They have been on hunger strike since Jan. 17 demanding resettlement of some 1,200 Kurd refugees in a country other than Pakistan. Spokesman Fayzal Abdullah Mohammad said the Kurds, aged between 24 and 36, refused to call off their strike until a representative from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) met their demands. Another seven Kurds in Rawalpindi's Adyala jail recently joined in the fast.

Simonet chosen to guide French football

PARIS (AFP) — Claude Simonet was elected unopposed as president of the French Football Federation Saturday. Simonet faces the tough task of guiding French soccer out of one of its darkest periods. His predecessor Jean Fourquet-Fayard resigned last November after France's failure to reach the World Cup finals. But the federation has still not taken definitive sanctions over the Olympique Marseille-Vallenciennes bribery scandal. "I suppose I am going to have to learn to let in goals," said Simonet who was a goalkeeper with Nantes for two months. Since giving up as a player, he has since risen through the ranks of football administration to become head of a regional championship and treasurer of the FFF.

Tsur opposes open Israeli borders with Palestinians

The Jerusalem Post

OPEN BORDERS with an autonomous Palestinian regime would mean Israel would continue to rely on cheap labour from the territories and would continue to control the Palestinians' economic destiny, Agriculture Minister Ya'acov Tsur said yesterday.

Speaking to the Rural Villages Association, Tsur said this arrangement would not solve either sides' problems, but only exacerbate the tension between Israelis and Palestinians.

Tsur said he knows of no example in the world in which two neighbouring countries, with a GNP ratio of close to 10 to 1, can integrate their economic systems fairly.

"The goal of a political settlement between Israel and the Palestinians needs to be the separation of the two, for only this will enable the two sides to develop as needed," said Tsur.

Any political agreement between the two sides will have to be predicated upon mutual interests and not those of only one side, Tsur told the gathering.

He added that separation will also spur the Palestinians to strengthen their ties to Jordan. "There is no doubt that the economic connection between the Palestinians and Jordan is also the proper direction for the political situation," he said.

Yemenis sign deal today

(Continued from page 1)

Arab leaders and has always supported the Arab League's endeavours in this respect, Dr. Abdul Meguid said.

Mr. Beidh and Mr. Saleh have been at odds since last August over the way the 1990 union between North and South Yemen has gone, plunging the country into its worst political crisis since the merger. They have not met in that time.

Mr. Saleh thanked King Hussein, who mediated between the two leaders, for hosting Sunday's signing ceremony.

Mr. Beidh arrived in Damascus on Friday after meeting Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo. Both countries helped mediate in the crisis. He was due to arrive in Amman in early on Sunday.

Mr. Beidh, whose party says 152 members have been killed since unity, would like to see a start to implementing the pact and providing security guarantees before he returns to Sana'a.

Soon after his arrival President Saleh went into a meeting with King Hussein and Crown Prince Hassan. Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and Jordan's ambassador to Yemen attended the meeting, which discussed the Sunday's reconciliation meeting.

Haidar Abu Bakr Al Attas, the Yemeni prime minister, also arrived Saturday.

Expressing delight at the visit to Jordan, Mr. Attas said he had "deep confidence that the reconciliation document would determine the correct path of Yemeni unity and pave the ground for democracy and freedoms for the Yemeni people."

Other Yemeni leaders arriving Saturday for the Sunday meeting included Ousem Salam, secretary general of the Yemeni Socialist Party, and members of a Yemeni dialogue committee.

Rabin: Delay better than problems

(Continued from page 1)

reunited with their families in the diaspora.

"This Israeli suggestion for the reunification... is unacceptable because it is incompatible with U.N. resolutions and international laws and norms," Mr. Hamid said.

Mr. Hamid said the Palestinians would continue to reject the Israeli proposal because "it's an attempt to resettle" the

refugees.

Another delegate, Walid Zaqout, said the PLO believes Palestinian families have "the right to return to their homes."

The working group on refugees is one of several forums of the multilateral Middle East peace talks launched in Moscow in January 1993 to deal with various aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

But, as it turned out, Mr. Beidh was arriving early Sunday, leaving little time for the Monarch to meet him before the signing of the agreement.

The problems that remain unresolved touch the crux of Yemeni unity and the modus vivendi that the conservative north and socialist south forged with their May 1990 unity.

Political analysts believe that Mr. Beidh's YSP, which ruled pre-unity South Yemen, has its eyes on the presidency despite the fact that it emerged only as the second largest party in April 1993 elections — post-

unity Yemen's first polls.

"They appear to want Yemeni unity as well as the presidency, and this is making things difficult," said a seasoned observer of Yemeni affairs.

According to this observer, President Saleh is serious in his offer to resign if that is what it would take to maintain Yemeni unity and avert a split up of the country. But, said the observer, the GPC was not willing to let go of the presidency.

Mr. Saleh and his party have agreed to an 18-point list of demands put forth by the YSP (compliance with those demands is the basic essence of the reconciliation accord to be

Pelletreau sworn in as assistant secretary for N.E. West

WASHINGTON — (USA) Ambassador Robert Pelletreau became Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern affairs Friday, taking the oath of office from his law school classmate, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy.

Mr. Pelletreau, with one hand upraised and the other on a Bible held by his wife, Dr. Pamela Pelletreau, was joined by his father, daughters Katherine and Pidge, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, members of the diplomatic corps, and colleagues.

"This is a time of special opportunity and challenge for the United States in the Middle East," Mr. Pelletreau said in brief remarks. "The opportunity lies in the real prospect for broader peace between Israel

and its Arab neighbours. The challenge comes from those regimes and forces which practice aggression against their neighbours and repression at home."

"There can be no compromise with terrorism or tyranny. But governments seeking... to open their societies and economic systems, and to improve the daily lives of their people... will find a friend and a partner in the United States."

Mr. Christopher, in remarks welcoming him to his new post, said "Bob Pelletreau... is one of our government's leading authorities on the Middle East... and is one of our most accomplished senior Arabic linguists."

The secretary underscored that "the administration places a very high priority on achiev-

ing a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace in the Middle East."

"The Israel-Palestinian declaration of principles was a large step toward addressing the core political problems that inhibit the search for peace in that area," Mr. Christopher said.

Additionally, the bilateral and multilateral tracks of negotiations "will require skillful shepherding, and Bob's understanding of the dynamics of these negotiations," he noted.

Mr. Pelletreau has been U.S. ambassador to Egypt, Bahrain and Tunisia, where he was tasked with initiating the U.S. dialogue with the PLO. Fluent in Arabic, he has also served in Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Lebanon, Jordan

and Syria.

Mr. Christopher stressed the "other concerns" of the United States in the region. "We shall enhance regional stability, counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, promote political and economic reform, to bring about the Arab boycott, and foster democracy and respect for human rights," he said.

An unrecognised role that the United States played in the former President John F. Kennedy, he said, is that he brought Bob Pelletreau into public service in 1961.

Mr. Pelletreau studied at the Institute of Political Studies in Paris, and at Harvard University, graduated from Harvard Law School and practiced law in New York.

Mr. Pelletreau's presence in Amman of leaders of all Yemeni political parties and at least three former presidents of pre-unity Yemen was encouraging.

"For once, all Yemeni politicians are congregated in one place, and they are powerful enough to take their own decisions," said one official.

"So, if need be, signing ceremony could be preceded or followed by political discussions aimed at resolving some of the hurdles that hamper the political process and moves on the ground in united Yemen," added the official.

"This episode can, however, become a crisis if the Russian initiative... were to take rash action... of worsening the situation in Sarajevo," he warned.

German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Russian President Boris Yeltsin have agreed to call for an international summit on Bosnia "as soon as possible."

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Economists: Japan trade surplus to start narrowing

TOKYO (Agencies) — Japan this week reported yet another surge in its bitterly contentious trade surplus, but economists said the trend would soon be reversed.

Tokyo's customs-cleared trade surplus with the world ballooned to \$6.11 billion in January, up from \$5.22 billion in the same month last year, the finance ministry said.

The most politically explosive chapter was the bilateral surplus with the United States, which rose once again, to \$3.13 billion, from \$2.93 billion in January 1993.

This chronic shortfall is so vexing to Washington that, after years of unsuccessful negotiations aimed at opening Japan's markets to imports, there is now growing talk of a trans-Pacific trade war.

Despite the latest rise, however, economists foresee a downward trend in the surpluses in coming months as the high yen makes Japanese goods more expensive overseas, putting a damper on exports.

"The surplus should continue after this in a basic downward trend," an economist at Dai-ichi Kangyo Bank Ltd. said. "At a news conference, one finance ministry official sought to put the trade picture in a different light."

"He noted that the January surplus marked the second consecutive monthly rise due mainly to rising exports to Asia rather than to North America or other regions."

However, the headline-grabbing news was the fact that the surplus with the United States had risen for the eighth month in a row.

After last Friday's failed summit between Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa and U.S. President Bill Clinton, this was sure to make trade hawks in Washington even more determined to

force Japan to change its ways.

"The bilateral surplus will remain large for the first half of this year," said Hidehiro Iwaki, senior economist at Nomura Research Institute. The U.S. economy had been picking up, encouraging imports from Japan despite the high yen, he added.

For the overall monthly trade picture, economists noted January figures habitually failed to reflect the general trend for Japan's trade, as new year holidays affect port activity.

One particular season for last month's sudden rise, however, was a flurry of car shipments to Europe, a bank economist said.

Japanese automakers had reached their yearly quota to the European Union before year's end, so car shipments ready in December were held off until January, he added.

Car and other automotive-related shipments make up around a quarter of Japan's exports and have a big impact on the overall trade picture.

Looking at the longer term, economists said the strong yen should hamper exports, but a growth in imports would depend on a pick-up in so far sluggish domestic consumer demand.

Nomura's Iwaki said the government's latest stimulus package, especially tax cuts from June, should prod consumers to buy again.

"Tax cuts have a psychological impact on consumers," he said. Economists also noted that, although the dollar surplus figure had risen sharply, much of that gain was due to currency movements. The surplus rose only 4.7 per cent in yen terms to 686 billion yen, from 655 billion a year earlier, but the dollar increase was 17 per cent.

"It is hard to predict

whether Japan's trade surplus will continue rising or not," the finance ministry official said. "It will depend on the dollar/yen rates and the economic situation in Japan and overseas."

Finance Minister Hirohisa Fuji said in a policy speech that a series of economic stimulus measures are lifting the Japanese economy out of recession.

"The economy still remains in a severe situation," he told the house of representatives. "But the time is steadily ripening for recovery with progress in inventory and capital stock adjustments."

He said Japan's week-old 15.25 trillion yen (\$140 billion) pump-priming package would lead the economy into a "full fledged recovery" early in the fiscal year 1994 beginning on April 1 and into "stable growth" in fiscal 1995.

Despite tight national finances, the stimulus package included an income tax cut of 5.85 trillion yen and additional spending on public works and it was sufficient in terms of size and content, Mr. Fuji said.

On Tuesday, the government also unveiled a third extra budget for the current fiscal year to March 31, which would boost overall spending by 2.185 trillion yen to 77.438 billion yen, including 1,500 billion yen in additional spending on public works.

The announcement of the economic package, originally scheduled for mid-January, was delayed due to infighting within the fragile ruling coalition over Prime Minister Hosokawa's political and tax reforms.

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which lost its 38-year grip on power in July elections, accused Mr. Hosokawa of delaying economic measures by insisting on political reform.

Chinese industry profits surge

BEIJING (AFP) — China's industrial sector reaped 145 billion yuan (\$16.9 billion) in profits last year, a leap of 62 per cent from 1992, but state-run firms remained in the doldrums, the China Daily said Friday.

Sales were also up 42 per cent last year, although loss-making factories — the majority of which are state-owned — continued to hamper industrial development, sitting on large amounts of raw materials and stocks.

More than 25 per cent of firms in the state-dominated heavy industry sector reported operating losses in 1993, a particularly poor performance given that nearly 70 per cent of last year's profits were generated by heavy industry.

Industrial output in January jumped 33 per cent compared to the same month last year, indicating that the Chinese authorities will have difficulty restricting production to the target level of around 20 per cent.

Limiting industrial output this year is seen as crucial to ensuring economic growth of less than 10 per cent, following 13 per cent growth last year.

In what may be another worrisome sign for the government, State Statistics Bureau figures showed that the gap between the booming coastal provinces and the less-prosperous interior widened last month.

Eleven areas, notably the already rich coastal provinces of Guangdong, Fujian and Jiangsu, saw industrial production rise more than 30 per cent, although the growth rate in poorer interior provinces such as Shanxi, Gansu and Qinghai was less than 20 per cent.

German public deficit rose 30b marks in '93

FRANKFURT (AFP) — Germany's public deficit rose to 140 billion marks (\$80 billion) in 1993, up 30 billion marks compared with the previous year, in large part due to the economic recession, the Bundesbank said in its February report.

But the central bank said the deficit should stop growing this year thanks to budgetary consolidation measures. It noted that the 1993 deficit represented 4.5 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) for the year, up from four per cent in 1992. The 1993 rate was topped only in 1975 with 6.5 per cent.

But using European Union tallying methods would bring the public deficit down to 3.4 per cent of the German GDP according to provisional data, which would not meet Maastricht treaty criteria requiring a

deficit not exceeding three per cent of GDP.

"It is particularly difficult to consolidate public finances in a recession, but there is no alternative in view of the size of the current deficit," the Bundesbank said.

It said that in 1993, state earnings were up around three per cent while spending rose nearly six per cent. The taxation rate, including social security payments, reached 54 per cent of GDP, an all-time high.

Germany is among countries with the highest taxation rate and therefore an additional hike of income and social taxes is out of the question, the Bundesbank said. "In order to maintain Germany's competitiveness, increasing the tax burden must be ruled out," it added.

Vietnam to cut investment red tape

HANOI (R) — Vietnam plans to simplify procedures for foreign investment including speeding up permits for the use of state-owned land, the Vietnam Investment Review reported Saturday.

The country's economic chief, Deputy Prime Minister Phan Van Khai, told the State Committee for Cooperation and Investment (SCCI) to act immediately "to simplify all kinds of procedures involving foreign-funded projects," the SCCL's weekly newspaper said.

The SCCL, the government watchdog on foreign investment, has licensed 857 projects — mostly in industry, oil and natural gas and hotels and tourism — with capital of \$7.8 billion. Only about one-third of the total has been committed.

Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, France, Malaysia, Australia, Singapore, Britain and the Nether-

lands are the top 10 countries with companies that have pledged investments.

The review quoted Mr. Khai as saying that if complicated investment application procedures were not adjusted, "they may hamper our efforts as well as the eagerness of foreign businessmen."

The SCCL and other authorities would overhaul regulations on land-use rights and construction permits in the next three months, the weekly said.

In Hanoi alone, at least six projects licensed two years ago had not got off the ground due to an inability to obtain land use permits, it added.

Mr. Khai said other central and local authorities should work with the SCCL to abolish red tape. "Once the licence has been given, land use rights and permits should be included," he was quoted as saying.

Suharto calls for workers' welfare

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia's President Suharto urged businessmen Saturday to do more for their workers than just paying the minimum wage.

"He (Suharto) said companies that have already made improvements should not look just at minimum wages. The companies should increase the workers' welfare if they have the capability to do it," manpower minister Abdul Latief told reporters after meeting President Suharto.

Earlier in the week, the United States postponed a decision on whether to end favoured treatment for Indonesian exports because of abuse of labour rights.

The United States had been expected to make a decision on whether to end GSP (generalized system of preferences) for Indonesian goods on Feb. 15. But the U.S. embassy said Thursday Indonesia would be given another six months to

end abuses.

"We are happy if we are given the GSP (generalized system of preferences) but it is linked to domestic issues, we disagree," Mr. Latief said. "It is linked to the workers' issue, we are continuing to improve our workers' welfare. We admitted that there are still shortcomings but we will improve."

Indonesia last month revoked a law allowing the powerful military to break-up strikes and raised the minimum daily wage by 27 per cent to around the equivalent of \$1.80.

But labour activists said the increase was not enough and the failure of some firms to pay the rise at all triggered a wave of strikes.

GSP affected exports to the United States worth some \$600 million in 1992 — about 14 per cent of Indonesia's total exports to the country.

World Bank to lend Bangladesh \$447m

WASHINGTON (R) — The World Bank said Friday that it approved two credits totalling \$447 million for Bangladesh.

The first credit of \$247 million will be used to reform the nation's loss-making jute manufacturing industry through privatisation and elimination of government subsidies.

"Because the jute industry is so dominant in the country's economy — providing about 10 per cent of total employment — the (loan) will help... (strengthen) prospects for the sustained development of a

market-oriented economy," the bank said.

The second credit of \$200 million will help finance construction of a bridge across the country's largest river, the Jamuna.

"The project will end the relative isolation of the north-west rural regions, which comprise about 27 million people and hold vast potential for growth," the bank said.

Both credits will be provided by the International Development Association, a World Bank affiliate that provides 40-year loans at no interest.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY FEBRUARY 20, 1994

By Thomas S. Person, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Despite minor annoyances you will find that you are able to handle whatever mental or business problem that comes up, in an effective manner as the Moon in Cancer trines Mercury. In the P.M.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Try to soothe members of your family who are upset. You can bring harmony of former chaotic conditions if you are wise.

Taurus: (April 20 to May 20) Get into the philosophical studies now that bring you peace and tranquility. Discuss joint ventures with allies. Avoid doing anything of a difficult nature and conserve your energy.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You are not as prosperous as you would like to be, so plan today just how to become more affluent in the future. Listen to what business experts have to suggest.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Avoid that person of little character and go out with persons friends today you have known for a long time.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Don't give in to that temptation to break promises to others or you get into trouble. Do not lose your temper with others, either. Be objective in your outlook.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Be careful you do not criticize good friends or make

radical changes that could be bad for you. Stick to the tried-and-true. Some personal effort is required to gain your finest aims.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) The right time to get financial affairs so organized that the future is brighter and happier. Get rid of that tension you have had for some time.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You have to study new ideas more carefully if you are to work successfully for you, so do not rush things now. Show that you are not a fool.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Be sure that you carry through with promises made. Be poised, calm, with others. Don't permit a loved one to do what you do not approve of, or vice versa.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) Listen carefully to what an old flame is saying or you may get the wrong impression altogether. Be wise and keep out of trouble.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 19) A good day to get much work done around the house. Please kin at home. Today is not a good day for dashing around aimlessly.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Go out for some recreation but be careful you do not go beyond your budget. Do some work on that hobby. However, be precise to get best results.

Belarus, Russia agree to monetary union

MOSCOW (R) — Russia and Belarus have agreed to a monetary union during talks here, a move which would require Belarus to surrender much of its economic sovereignty to Moscow, Interfax News Agency said Saturday.

Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and his Belarusian counterpart Vyacheslav Kebich signed a document on monetary union during talks in Moscow on Friday, Belarus government spokesman Vladimir Zametatin told Interfax.

Mr. Zametatin, who was accompanying Mr. Kebich, said an inter-republican committee was given until Feb. 20-21 to work out the final details of the agreement.

Economists say a monetary union with Belarus will cost Moscow dear and provide little

benefit.

Premier Kebich hopes that monetary and economic integration with Russia will help save the collapsing economy of Belarus, already one of the most conservative, former Soviet republics.

His government blames Belarus's economic difficulties on the collapse of the Soviet Union.

If the deal goes ahead, Moscow is expected to supply Russian rubles to exchange the republic's much weaker currency for its own and provide raw material and energy supplies to its neighbour at subsidised prices.

For Belarus, it would mean subordination of its monetary, fiscal and budget policies to Russia after more than two years of independence following centuries of Lithuanian, Polish, Russian and finally

Soviet rule.

Even top government officials in Belarus now admit that independence was not such a good idea. Pro-independence parliamentary chairman and de facto head of state Stanislav Shushkevich, who negotiated the end of the Soviet Union in December 1991 with the leaders of Russia and Ukraine, was sacked by parliament last month.

Mr. Kebich, who sees his country's future closely tied to Russia, said this week that monetary and economic integration with Russia was the only way to save the republic's economy.

The proposal to create a "rouble zone" with Belarus helped trigger last month's resignations of reformist Russian ministers Yegor Gaidar and Boris Fyodorov, who accused the centrist Premier Cher-

nyomyrdin of conducting policy behind their backs.

The departure of key reformers from the Russian government has left Soviet-era conservatives at the helm of the Russian economy, including Soviet-era central bank chairman Viktor Geraschenko.

Mr. Geraschenko, a protégé of Mr. Chernomyrdin, favours pumping cheap credits to former Soviet republics to help finance their imports from Russia.

Mr. Kebich, like Mr. Chernomyrdin, has urged a return to Soviet-style economic measures including fixed food prices and an end to all talk of shock therapy.

Belarusian reforms lag way behind that in Russia. The government has privatised only three per cent of state property.

Ethiopia to allow private banks, insurance firms

ADDIS ABABA (R) — Ethiopia, struggling to build a free market economy out of two decades of failed hardline Marxism, will allow its citizens to own banks and insurance firms, a senior official has said.

Leikun Berhanu, governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia, told reporters such businesses, until now a government monopoly, would only be open to Ethiopians under a share option system.

"The business will open only to Ethiopian nationals at this stage and no foreign banks or nationals will be allowed to participate," he said. "But nothing is static in Ethiopia. We believe that as the economy of the country improves, the participation of foreign banks could be considered."

Mr. Leikun said Ethiopians planning to set up a private bank would be required to produce a minimum of 10 million birr (\$2 million) paid up share capital.

He said each shareholder in the private bank would be limited by law not to own more than 20 per cent of the share capital. "Such a limit is required to avoid monopoly of the bank by a group, a family or an individual," he added.

Allowing citizens to run banks and insurance firms is part of steps being taken by the government to open up the economy of the Horn of Africa country to free market forces.

Under dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam, who was overthrown in 1991, Ethiopia pursued hardline Marxist policies which virtually bankrupted the country.

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen

"This instant spray-on hair doesn't work for mustaches."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argillon

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

WAKOE
FRAMEK
GLABEM
CRAIPY

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: A "O O O O O" OF (Answer tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: JOKER MOOSE SUBMIT CUDDLE
Answer: What the theatrical troupe invested in — SUMMER STOCK

Peanuts

Andy Capp

Mutt'n'Jeff

THE Daily Crossword by Samuel K. Flegner

ACROSS
1 Country music's Johnny
5 Movie
10 Fundamentals
14 Fit of shivering
15 Show flower
16 Paper measure
17 Equal
18 Steel palm
19 Part of TLC
20 "Ten" — school
22 Taps, e.g.
23 Map — hung
26 Pluff
27 Over there
28 Rouse
30 Epitaph
32 Recurrent theme
33 First-rate
34 — star
37 Bridget Fonda
41 M.L. Lander
42 Clothing
43 Exhausted
44 — Hume
46 Truman, the author
47 Bring into being
50 Enclave
52 Actor Harrison
53 Member
54 Canadian province
56 October stone
57 Related to
58 Forearm bone
59 Defense org.
60 Knight's weapon
64 Smile radiantly
65 Whistle
66 Bowler
67 Nervous

DOWN
1 Mountain
2 Mallow
3 Lungs
4 Man on a pedestal
5 Yalta conference
6 Ontario's neighbor
7 Court record
8 November statistics
9 Cavett or Clark
10 Mysterious
11 Quotable
12 Cut with care
13 Slander
21 Chi's dent
22 Delirium
23 — B.C., Fla.
24 Fairy
25 Dine at home
27 North Sea leader
29 Relative
30 Superclaus one
32 At a distance
34 Court record
35 Mountain ridge
36 Textbook part
37 TV show
38 Day's march for troops
40 Gravity
44 — made (lited)
45 Catch-all abbr.
46 Telegrams
47 Old hag
48 Settle an IOU
49 Gladden
51 Respond to a stimulus
54 — d'Orsay
55 Rubik's
57 TV show
59 Directed
60 Deceit
61 Possess Lower

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

PICTA SIENIA ABRA
GRIED DIAGRA REIG
ONONDS BRIDGES
ADA BOAN
AUGORBS PHILIPP
BIBBOS TOODLE EWE
RAGE DADIS RAGE
MAE MATED MARIO
ANDRARS EMBASSOR
PIRANIS RAN
RIGORIS PIRANIS
HARR GRARRR AND
DEED DEED AND
DEED DEED DEED

Bhutto vows to contain Pakistan budget deficit

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has vowed to enforce financial discipline and contain the budget deficit, which has reached nine per cent of gross domestic product (GDP).

Inaugurating a bank's new building, she said her four-month-old government has taken austerity measures to bring down the deficit and has cracked down on loan defaulters and tax evaders.

"The deficit has jumped to nine per cent of GDP because of 'reckless' spending by the previous government, led by her arch foe Nawaz Sharif, she said.

Ms. Bhutto has been strongly critical of costly infrastructure development plans initiated by Mr. Sharif, who resigned as prime minister in July, amid a political crisis halfway through his five-year term.

After she took office in October following a general election, Ms. Bhutto scaled down 24-billion-rupee (\$800 million) Lahore-Islamabad motorway project and scrapped another, similar scheme.

Ms. Bhutto pledged to build a free market economy and to sell some 30 state-owned industrial units to the private sector.

"Our vision about the economic future of Pakistan is clear — a liberal, market-propelled economy and a vibrant hub of agricultural and industrial growth in the region," she said.

Ms. Bhutto said her economic policies had started showing results.

The stock market was growing, foreign institutional investors had renewed their interest in Pakistan, and the country's foreign exchange reserves had increased to \$1.2 billion from a dismal \$280 million when she took over, Ms. Bhutto said.

Lithuanian economy in mid-stream

VILNIUS (AFP) — Lithuania has reduced hyperinflation with the introduction of its new currency and has managed to halt the downward curb of industrial output but privatisation is sluggish and foreign investors seem reluctant to put money into the Baltic republic.

"We hope inflation will not exceed 50 per cent in 1994," said Lithuanian Economy Minister Julius Veselka in an interview with AFP.

The target seems realistic in the light of what was achieved in the second half of 1993 following the introduction of the litas: Inflation in the second semester was 38 per cent compared to 1,160 per cent in 1992.

In January this year, for the first time wages rose in real terms faster than inflation, Mr. Veselka said.

The currency is stable at 3.9 litas for \$1 and the country has a trade surplus thanks largely to the reexport to Western countries of non-ferrous metals bought in the former Soviet republics and the sale of refined petroleum products from its Mazeikiu refinery.

The official unemployment rate is under two per cent but Mr. Veselka estimated hidden unemployment at 20 per cent or even 25 per cent. He said this was an unexpected result of privatisation as workers who had become shareholders of their company were now refusing to let unprofitable firms be closed or their workforce cut down.

Western diplomats in Vilnius said many people were engaged in unregistered jobs in what they called a "grey area" of the economy. Some flew to Turkey or the United Emirates on a regular basis to bring back cloth or video recorders for sale here.

Mr. Veselka said this kind of unofficial work might account for up to 30 per cent of economic activity.

Privatisation of farming has led to a sharp decline in agricultural output. The collective farms have disappeared and former peasants who had gone to work in the cities have returned to take over small farms. They are deeply attached to their land but have neither the means nor the know-how to make the farms profitable, a diplomat said.

Lithuania would welcome foreign investment and could put it to good use, but Western investors have been slow to take up the opportunity of reasons Mr. Veselka bluntly blamed on the "primitive nationalism" of his compatriots.

In 1993, he said, the government had spent only \$4,000 on advertisements to attract potential investors.

What is more, the authorities cannot always be relied on to keep agreements made with foreign groups. In Vilnius, the large Hotel Lietuva had been sold to the U.S. group Cambridge for \$10 million under a letter of intent which provided for additional investments of \$15.5 million in the future.

The authorities signed the letter of intent then revoked the sale.

Israeli financial markets shaken by series of scandals

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Investigations, scandals and trials involving securities dealers and the country's biggest banks have shaken Israel's financial markets as they've never been shaken before.

The Tel Aviv stock market has plummeted 10.6 per cent since the start of the month, back to its September level. It plunged a spectacular 5.39 per cent Thursday alone this week, putting down Israeli shares listed in New York by five per cent.

"Stock market crisis" was one headline in mass-circulation Israeli daily Yediot Aharonot Friday as it pointed to the possibility of a temporary closure of the bourse.

The daily Haaretz commented that "the crisis suffered by financial institutions is unprecedented, as it is explained solely by investors' loss of confidence in the market's dominant institutions and has no economic basis."

There have been two scandals lately. First, the trial of Vladimir Saur and Aris Shafir, two immigrants from the former Soviet Union known as the "Russian scandal" and suspected of underhand purchase of their own securities — which is illegal.

And Wednesday, the stock market took it on the chin again with the news that one of Tel Aviv's leading securities dealers, Amos Weiss, had been arrested, and a senior executive of major financial group ITV, Yoram Kaplan, had been questioned by police.

Rumors that the investigation implicated some big investors and pension funds made a nervous market even more nervous.

The same day, former executives of the country's four biggest banks were held and put on "fraudulent management" that led to a disastrous collapse in bank shares and then to the October 1983 crash.

The four banks had artificially boosted their own stock prices by buying their shares under the table, with the treasury's tacit approval.

The crash wiped out \$7 billion in stock values and the treasury had to pick up the tab by buying up the bank shares to avoid national bankruptcy.

The Israeli banks are the government's main creditors, and they buy indexed government bonds on bloc.

Only the Discount Bank among the "big four" is controlled by private interests. Leumi is controlled by the Jewish Agency. Hapoalim by the Histadrut labour confederation, and Hamizrahi by the National Religious Party.

The Tel Aviv stock market, sporting average daily volume on the order of \$130 million, has rocketed upward by 800 per cent since 1989, thanks particularly to the fact that house profits are not taxed in Israel — while income tax can hit 50 per cent.

Late in the week, a scandal broke at the Israel directorate of regulation of the financial markets, reminding the country that the 1983 crash had been an national disaster.

Finance Minister Yoram Shohat said the directorate's investigation would speed up application of such legislation as well as privatisation of the banks.

Economic experts said the positive aspects of the crisis, which will make it possible to force wounding institutions out of the market.

"The dizzying rise in share prices was not justified by the facts. And in the final analysis, the crisis will give the market a sense of reality," a leading commentator said on radio.

Etisalat '93 profits rise to \$310 million

ABU DHABI (R) — The telecommunications firm Etisalat, the largest publicly-held company in the United Arab Emirates, said profits rose eight per cent to 1.14 billion dirhams (\$310 million) in 1993.

The official news agency WAM quoted an Etisalat statement Saturday as saying the 1993 profit represents about 96 per cent of paid-up capital of 1.5 billion dirhams (\$408 million).

It said the company paid a dividend of 50 dirhams (about \$14). It distributed 47 million dirhams (\$26 million) to its shareholders representing 50 per cent on the nominal value of its shares.

Trading of Etisalat's shares, which have a face value of 100 dirhams and are mostly held by the government, leads activity in the UAE's unofficial stock market. They now trade at 975 dirhams (\$265).

Etisalat has approved expenditure of 1.7 billion dirhams (\$463 million) for 1994, almost double spending in 1993.

On Friday WAM quoted General Manager Ali Saleh Al Owais as saying Etisalat was aiming to have its own satellite in orbit and would submit a tender to build it in the second quarter of this year, confirmed by a study. He said in a separate satellite would cost 1.5 billion dirhams.

The company has a monopoly on telecommunications services in the UAE but has lifted a ban on equipment supplied by other companies.

Oman sees new company tax raising \$60m in '94

MUSCAT (R) — Oman expects to earn 23 million Omani riyals (\$60 million) in 1994 from a new tax on companies wholly-owned by Omanis, an official said Saturday.

"Oman expects the volume of tax raised this year to be 23 million Omani riyals following the imposition... of the tax law," said a statement by Suleiman Bin Muhammad Al Adawi, general director of taxes at the finance ministry.

"Our country expects to increase that figure in the coming years," he added.

Oman, an oil exporter trying to develop other sources of income, has decreased new taxes effective Jan. 1 on wholly Omani-owned industrial and trading companies, previously exempt from tax.

The new law says most such companies with annual revenues of over 30,000 Omani riyals (\$78,000) are to pay tax of between five and 7.5 per cent of total income.

Companies of mixed Omani-foreign or wholly foreign ownership are already subject to taxation.

Mr. Adawi said the owners of any company trying to skirt the law would face a 50 per cent (\$13,000) fine or five years in jail, or both.

Oman's 1994 budget predicted government revenues for the year of 1.75 billion riyals (\$5.3 billion), 70 per cent from oil revenue.

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN (JORDAN)

TELEPHONE: 66-177 67433

ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 19/02/1994

COUNTRY'S NAME

TRADED VOLUME
C3
PREV. CLOSING PRICE
OPENING PRICE
CLOSING PRICE

ABU DHABI	101,935	121.12	121.12	121.12
AMMAN NATIONAL BANK	1,213	12.92	12.92	12.92
AMMAN INVESTMENT BANK	1,213	12.92	12.92	12.92
AMMAN DEVELOPMENT BANK	1,213	12.92	12.92	12.92
AMMAN COMMERCIAL BANK	1,213	12.92	12.92	12.92
AMMAN TRADING BANK	1,213	12.92	12.92	12.92
AMMAN INDUSTRIAL BANK	1,213	12.92	12.92	12.92
AMMAN AGRICULTURAL BANK	1,213	12.92	12.92	12.92
AMMAN TOURISM BANK	1,213	12.92	12.92	12.92
AMMAN TRANSPORT BANK	1,213	12.92	12.92	12.92
AMMAN MARITIME BANK	1,213	12.92	12.92	12.92
AMMAN AIRWAYS BANK	1,213	12.92	12.92	12.92
AMMAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	1,213	12.92	12.92	12.92
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14 sleeping ANC youths killed in S. Africa's worst massacre

DURBAN, South Africa (AP) — Gunmen shot and killed 14 sleeping ANC supporters — 12 of them youths — in South Africa's worst massacre this year, African National Congress (ANC) officials said.

ANC spokesman said unidentified gunmen with automatic weapons shot the group of 14 sleeping in a house in the town of Vredenburg in the Western Cape province early Saturday.

First reports showed that 12 of the victims were aged from 12 to 22, the spokesman said. Regional ANC Chairman Harry Gwala told the South African Press Association (SAPA) that the victims were ANC members preparing for a vote education workshop in the town of Vredenburg on April's first all-race elections.

Mr. Gwala's deputy, Zibuse Mkhize, appeared to blame supporters of the rival Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) when he told SAPA the attack was motivated by "those who don't want peace to vote."

The IFP-dominated province of Natal has been at the center of conflict between the IFP and Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi and the ANC of Nelson Mandela.

Mr. Buthelezi said three children were slain in a similar massacre in the Natal town of Richmond two weeks ago.

Mr. Buthelezi is boycotting the April 26-28 elections while the ANC, which is likely to win an overall majority, is campaigning hard for support among the six million Zulus, who are the country's biggest ethnic group.

Mr. Buthelezi seeks virtual autonomy in the traditional Zulu homeland that comprises most of Natal province as well as a return to the traditional Zulu monarchy under King Goodwill Zwelithini.

State radio said the youths killed Saturday had been collecting money for voter education and had made an informal camp in an abandoned hut.

Voter education for the watershed election is supposed to be in the hands of the independent electoral commission.

Foreign governments have donated millions of dollars to a variety of South African agencies committed to non-partisan voter education.

Mr. Mandela announced wide-ranging political concessions Wednesday in a bid to draw Mr. Buthelezi and the right-wing Freedom Alliance of black and white federalists, including Inkatha, into the election.

Mr. Buthelezi had rejected the concessions, however, and independent Radio 702 quoted him Friday as saying that even if he was persuaded to accept the deal it was too late to start campaigning for the poll.

He vowed earlier this week to allow the ANC to campaign in Natal in return for the right to have his own supporters campaign for a boycott of the election.

Campaigning is well under way for the election of a government of national unity and an all-race parliament that will also write a post-apartheid constitution for South Africa. Government. Inkatha and

ANC politicians have all complained of intimidation and programmes to buy electoral support.

Reacting to the massacre, Law and Order Minister Hendrik Kriel Saturday urged political leaders to control their followers to lessen tension at grassroots level in the run-up to the election.

The killings were "yet another indication that levels of political intolerance and intimidation have reached very dangerous levels," he said.

One of Mr. Buthelezi's allies in the Freedom Alliance, President Lucas Mangope of the nominally-independent Bophuthatswana tribal homeland, said Saturday he believed a negotiated settlement was still possible with the ANC.

But if no solution was reached, the territory would remain "the independent Republic of Bophuthatswana" and would "fight fire with fire" if there was any attempt to destabilise it, he said.

Gen. Mangope, who has not registered to take part in the election, told a special congress of his Bophuthatswana Christian Democratic Party that if the concessions it was demanding were made "Bophuthatswana will sign on and commit itself unreservedly to the process."

Bophuthatswana and another member of the alliance, the white right-wing Afrikaner Volksfront, are holding talks with the ANC on the concessions announced Wednesday.

President F.W. de Klerk said Friday he doubted dissenting groups would immediately

accept African National Congress proposals to bring them into the nation's first all-race election.

"I don't think there is reason at the moment to be confident about that. Mr. De Klerk told reporters covering his campaign swing through small towns north of Cape Town on the nation's west coast.

But he said a series of meetings involving the National Party government, the ANC and members of the opposition Freedom Alliance could yield results over the weekend.

"I think there is an open door," Mr. De Klerk said, adding that he believed the proposals announced Wednesday by Mr. Mandela address "the core and the heart of what is of concern to the Freedom Alliance."

Threats from the Freedom Alliance to boycott South Africa elections and go to war should not be given too much weight, Mr. Mandela said Friday.

Mr. Mandela, speaking to journalists at the end of a two-day visit to the Netherlands, said the threats of violence from black and white parties in the Alliance were greatly exaggerated, and it was not in a position to go to war.

The ANC leader said: "We must not exaggerate the importance of the organisations in the Freedom Alliance. We don't even think that they have the capacity to conduct a civil war."

He did not believe the boycott threat was final, but even if it was carried out it would not stop the election process.



South African President F.W. de Klerk waves to supporters in the rural town of Vredenburg in the Western Cape during an election roadshow in the build up to the April elections (AFP photo)

Tensions rise as N. Korea delays visas for IAEA nuclear inspectors

SEOUL (AFP) — Tensions over an agreed resumption of inspections of North Korean nuclear sites rose Saturday as an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) team remained in Vienna without visas five days after Pyongyang had approved its mission.

The agreement Tuesday by the isolated Communist regime in North Korea, which is suspected of running a covert nuclear arms programme, had been greeted with relief in Washington and Seoul, where memories of the 1950-53 Korean War are still painful.

It also appeared to have averted a possible crisis days before a crucial IAEA board of governors meeting in Vienna Monday, facing the prospect of referring the deadlock inspection programme to the United Nations Security Council for possible economic sanctions against Pyongyang.

Hans Meyer, an IAEA spokesman in Vienna, said no visas had arrived Saturday, adding that they would probably not be issued prior to Monday's meeting.

"It is clear that had our inspectors been able to leave (for North Korea) as of Sunday, that would have had a positive influence" on the IAEA meeting, Meyer said. But sources close to the

IAEA in Vienna said the board was likely to adopt a low-key approach to the deadlock pending the inspectors' mission.

The IAEA was forced to suspend its programme last February, Pyongyang, which aggravated the standoff in March by threatening to quit the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, has in the interim repeatedly refused to authorise the programme's resumption and threatened war if sanctions are imposed.

Tuesday's agreement covered only seven declared sites, but was seen as the first breakthrough in the standoff.

Two undeclared sites, at Yongbyon, north of Pyongyang, are described by the North as non-nuclear military installations beyond the purview of the IAEA, but where Western military experts believe a nuclear weapons programme is based.

It was hoped renewed inspections would open the way for the IAEA to persuade Pyongyang to allow access to those sites.

The IAEA's main priority during what has been flagged as a two-to-three-week inspection tour is to verify that no radioactive material from the seven sites — declared by Pyongyang as civilian installa-

tions — has been transferred to arms production.

IAEA spokesman David Kyd said the agency was certain Pyongyang has produced more plutonium than it has declared, but that it is not sure this constituted sufficiency for a nuclear bomb.

South Korean Foreign Minister Han Sung-joo who rushed to Washington last week to confer with U.S. officials ahead of Monday's meeting expressed his unease Friday.

When asked if he thought Pyongyang could simply be playing games with the world community, he told CNN Television: "We are all asking that question."

"First we have to see whether there is any genuine possibility of making progress on this problem... and then find out for sure that they are not interested in resolving this question, then we'll have to respond accordingly."

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher reaffirmed in Washington Thursday U.S. commitment to ensuring a non-nuclear Korean peninsula.

Meanwhile, Pyongyang renewed its charge Friday that South Korea intended to build nuclear weapons with plutonium from nuclear reactors.

Spy magazine closes after no buyer is found

NEW YORK (R) — Spy, a satirical magazine whose savaging of public figures included covers showing first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton as a leather-clad dominatrix and tough-guy actor Bruce Willis pregnant, closed Friday. After a months-long search for a buyer, assistant editor Carol Vinzant said the editorial staff was called together late Friday afternoon and told by the acting publisher that the eight-year-old monthly magazine would no longer publish. "I started to cry, other people started to cry," Ms. Vinzant said, adding that in recent weeks there had been renewed hope that a buyer would be found for the privately owned magazine. Spy, which had a circulation last year of 194,000, used flashy graphics, heavy gossip and sometimes outrageous covers to lure its readers. One cover featured a superimposed photograph of first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton's head on the body of a leather-clad dominatrix. The caption was: "What Hillary problem?" Another cover had a computer-generated rendering of a pregnant Bruce Willis, satirising the Vanity Fair cover of the actor's wife, Demi Moore, who was pictured nude when she was almost nine months pregnant.

U.S. women get access to RU-486 via London

NEW YORK (R) — After six years, American women have finally won the right to use the RU-486 abortion pill but they will have to pay for a plane ticket to London, pay for a hotel and a \$500 fee to do it. In yet another twist in the long, emotional controversy over abortion and the pill that many claim simplifies the procedure, the Marie Stopes Health Clinic in London said it has finally won British Health Department approval for American women to use the pill at its London facilities. A spokeswoman for the clinic said in a telephone interview that she expected dozens of American women a week to fly to London to use the pill under the clinic's care for a cost of \$500. Anti-abortion groups called the decision a public relations stunt designed to promote what they see as a potentially dangerous pill and to force it on the American market. But abortion rights advocates hailed the decision as a major victory for American women who want abortions but do not want to undergo a possibly dangerous surgical procedure.

India's legendary 'bandit queen' released

NEW DELHI (R) — India's legendary "bandit queen", jailed without trial since 1983 on murder, kidnapping and robbery charges, was released Saturday. The Supreme Court Friday ordered that Phoolan Devi be freed on parole after the newly elected government of northern Uttar Pradesh state said it would withdraw the charges. Ms. Phoolan was released after providing a bond of 50,000 rupees (\$1,613). She went to a relative's home where she will be given police protection. The court ordered the protection after Ms. Phoolan's lawyer said she feared for her life and did not want to return to Uttar Pradesh. "We consider it appropriate to release her on parole pending the disposal of applications moved by the state government in various courts for withdrawal of prosecution against her," the Supreme Court judges said. They said Ms. Phoolan, who was 23 when she surrendered to police in February 1983, should go free because she had spent 10 years in prison without being tried on any of the 44 cases she faced.

Law to castrate rapists put forward

TALLAHASSEE, Florida (AFP) — A bill introduced here that calls for chemically castrating rapists with prior convictions has whipped up debate on how to put the brakes on crime in Florida. Democratic Senator Robert Wexler has proposed prison for rapists convicted for the first time, injecting testosterone suppressing drugs the second time and the electric chair for a third-time offender. Taking a tougher stand against rapists was one aspect of an anti-crime package before both houses.

U.S. upgrades contacts with New Zealand

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The United States said Friday it was upgrading contacts with New Zealand which were restricted seven years ago in a dispute over nuclear policy.

The announcement, made in a statement issued by the State Department, stressed that while the Clinton administration has decided to resume senior-level contacts, the step did not mean restoration of U.S. defence obligations to New Zealand.

But clearly, the new position is designed to move the two countries back towards more normal ties.

Since 1987, Washington has restricted political, military and security contacts as a result of New Zealand's adoption of legislation preventing U.S. Navy vessels and military aircraft from visiting that country.

U.S. defence obligations under the ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, United States) treaty have also been suspended since then.

In its statement, the State Department said that in recent months the administration reviewed its policy and agreed to continue to press for a change in the legislation "while recognising that our two countries have important business to conduct outside the area of defence relations."

"To advance that goal, we have decided to restore senior-level contacts between U.S. officials with their strategic and broad security matters," it said.

The statement noted that the two countries have enjoyed close relations over most of the century, have fought together in virtually every major conflict, share fundamental values, and have worked together closely in the U.N. Security Council and in successful world trade talks.

"Our decision to restore senior-level contacts does not signify a restoration of our previous alliance with New Zealand, under ANZUS nor does it foreshadow adjustments in other aspects of our present security cooperation that have been curtailed," it said.

"It is our hope that our decision to upgrade contacts with New Zealand... will lead over time to resolution of the issues that impede restoration of the full relationship which our two countries enjoyed before 1987," the statement said.

President Bill Clinton has made improved economic and political ties with Asia and the Pacific a hallmark of his administration.

Study questions Pentagon's ability to fight 2 wars

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. military would be hard pressed today to win two major regional conflicts at once because of problems in getting troops to war and managing them on the battlefield, a Pentagon study has suggested.

The Interim Report, released by a group of retired senior officers, said defence preparedness was "adequate". But they urged the Pentagon to put more emphasis on the ability of the army, navy, air force and Marines to cooperate in battle.

Defence Secretary William Perry and Army General John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters they were already moving to address the problems, including improvements in air-lift and sealift of troops and finding out how to measure future war-fighting ability.

Retired General Edward Myer, head of the task force appointed last year by former Defence Secretary Les Aspin to study readiness, was asked if the Pentagon had reached its post-cold war goal of being able to fight and win two regional wars virtually at once.

"The answer from the task force would be that we know several areas that we have looked at — and it says so right in the paper — that would make it difficult for the U.S. to do that at this time," said Gen. Myer.

Mr. Perry told a press conference that the department needed to develop better ways

to measure the future fighting ability to the military, especially at a time of shrinking budgets.

Gen. Myer, who plans to release a final report in May, said that C-41 (command, control, communications, computers and intelligence) and strategic lift were two areas where improvements were needed.

The navy is currently building a fleet of transport ships for heavy weapons and troops, and the air force is pushing hard for the troubled McDonnell Douglas Corp. C-17 cargo plane to address mobility problems that arose in the 1991 Gulf War.

Mr. Perry said the defence Department and Congress were on the same track towards spending more money on military operations and maintenance — a key factor in readiness — in the 1995 fiscal year beginning next Oct. 1 next even as total defence spending is being cut.

Gen. Shalikashvili praised the work by the retired officers despite initial anguish expressed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff last year when Mr. Aspin appointed the retired panel without first informing active duty military leaders.

Gen. Myer is a former army chief of staff. Other retired senior officers serving on the panel include two from the army, two from the navy, one from the air force, one from the Marine Corps and one from army National Guard.

Reynolds: Attacks will not derail Ulster peace drive

LONDON (R) — Irish leader Albert Reynolds Saturday pledged that renewed IRA attacks would not derail his faltering quest for peace in Northern Ireland with British Prime Minister John Major.

But his London talks with Mr. Major were overshadowed by a rash of suspected IRA firebomb attacks on stores in the British capital that were clearly timed as a warning signal to the two leaders.

Before meeting Mr. Major at his Downing Street residence in London, Mr. Reynolds was strikingly upbeat — despite the Irish Republican Army (IRA) killing of a policeman in Belfast, a flurry of Protestant sectarian attacks and the London firebomb blitz.

"I think there has been quite considerable progress," Mr. Reynolds said of peace prospects since he and Mr. Major agreed a joint declaration in December that sought to end one of the world's longest-running guerrilla conflicts.

Firebombs were set off in seven London stores early Saturday morning. No one was injured and the fires were quickly put out. Detectives

said they bore all the hallmarks of a concerted IRA attack.

Fires broke out in seven central London stores Saturday in a suspected IRA firebomb blitz.

Police said the early morning fires in the Oxford Street, Regent Street and Charing Cross Road central shopping district bore all the hallmarks of incendiary attacks by the Irish Republican Army.

No one was injured and the fires were quickly put out but a large area of central London was sealed off before dawn.

Damage at most of the stores, including Liberty's, was restricted to water damage from sprinkler systems, but a newsagent's shop was gutted by fire.

Anti-terrorist police were called to the scene of the fires which followed an upsurge of guerrilla violence in Northern Ireland this week. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the incendiaries.

The Irish Republican Army, battling to oust Britain from Northern Ireland, has been offered a place at the negotiating table within three months if it drops down its arms.

Mexican peace talks begin today

SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS, Mexico (R) — The Mexican government's peace envoy and Maya Indian rebels will meet Sunday in the beginning of what is expected to be a long peace process aimed at ending a blood uprising in the southern state of Chiapas.

The peace envoy will gather with representatives of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) somewhere in Chiapas, then move to a still undisclosed location for formal peace talks Monday.

The beginning of negotiations, pursued by the peace envoy for weeks and finally agreed to by the rebels, overcomes the first of what are expected to be many hurdles to ending the seven-week-old uprising.

The talks will focus on poverty and repression in Chiapas, but the prickly issue of national political reforms also hangs over the negotiating table.

The rebels, who stunned the nation by declaring war on the army on New Year's Day and seizing control of a huge chunk of mountain and jungle territory, are demanding land reform, democracy and an end to the repression of indigenous peoples.

In response, the peace envoy is expected to offer a "new deal" for impoverished Maya Indians who have stuck at the bottom of the social ladder since the Spanish conquest almost 500 years ago.

While government officials have pledged to put more money into Chiapas, it is not clear what else they can offer and no major breakthroughs are expected in the first round

U.S. attacks Greek move against Macedonia

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The State Department has again expressed displeasure with Greece's closing of Macedonia's main trade route, urging the two sides to negotiate their dispute.

Spokesman Michael McCurry said the United States has "very strongly expressed our deep concern to the Greek government specifically for the action they've taken... It serves no purpose for either country to engage in that type of activity."

He referred to Greece's order Wednesday, closing its northern port of Salonica to all goods bound for landlocked Macedonia except for food and medicine.

"We don't think it's in the interest of either country to try to resolve their differences through trade restrictions or embargoes," McCurry said addressing the spat over Macedonia's name for the second straight day.

"Our view is that there's a preferred path, and that's negotiation, and that's the one that we're urging on both governments."

Greece objects to Macedonia's name and national symbol and accuses it of having territorial ambitions over the northern Greek province of Macedonia.

Greece has said it is going to continue its embargo until the former Yugoslav republic gives up the name Republic of Macedonia. The United States and most European nations have recognised the new state under the compromise title: Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Reports from the Macedonian capital, Skopje, said that long lines have been forming at shops and gasoline stations since Greece's action.

In an attempt to bypass the embargo, Macedonian officials reportedly have contacted Bul-

garia and asked to move supplies through the Black Sea port of Burgas, a more distant and expensive route.

On Friday, Albanian Foreign Minister Alfred Serreji offered Macedonia the use of the Albanian port of Durres to circumvent the embargo.

Durres is 180 kilometres from Macedonia, but Albania's roads are in poor condition.

Transport officials from Turkey, Bulgaria, Albania and Italy and Macedonia told journalists they had agreed on a road and rail link to the former Yugoslav republic, which would be coordinated in the Bulgarian capital.

The creation of such a corridor was an "urgent necessity" after Greece's decision, Bulgaria's Deputy Transport Minister Yorgo Sundovski said at a press conference.

A European Union (EU) spokesman said experts at the executive EU commission are

to study the impact of the Greek decision, which could breach community laws on free trade with a third state, and it will be discussed by the 12 European Union foreign ministers at their meeting Monday.

Belgian Foreign Minister Willy Claes, attending a meeting in Athens of the EU "troika" of past, present and future EC presidents — Belgium, Greece and Germany — said the blockade was "naturally in contradiction" with the Maastricht Treaty on European Union.

But Greek European Affairs Minister Theodore Pangalos swiftly rejected the criticism, saying his government's decision "conformed with European law."

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, also attending the troika meeting, had earlier demanded Greece immediately lift its trade embargo of its land-locked neighbour.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Qouriea turns down Israeli invitation

TUNIS (AP) — A Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) finance official Saturday said he turned down an invitation to visit occupied Jerusalem for an economic conference because an agreement on Palestinian self-rule had not been signed yet. Israeli media reported earlier that Ahmad Qouriea, head of the Economic Department, would attend a seminar in occupied Jerusalem later this month on joint projects for economic development in the occupied territories. "The possibility of me visiting Israel is ruled out before an agreement on the transfer of power, Mr. Qouriea told the Tunisian newspaper Al Rai Al Amm.

PLO list sweeps Gaza elections

GAZA (R) — A list affiliated with Fatah swept elections for the Gaza Arab Medical Association Friday, an election official said. The result is considered a barometer of support for the Palestine Liberation Organisation. The National Independence List aligned with Fatah won all 11 seats on the association for which 1,006 doctors, dentists and veterinarians were eligible to vote, the official said. Also contesting the elections were two lists opposed to the peace deal with Israel: fundamentalist alliance of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and a bloc of dissident PLO factions — the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Kuwait rights group call off exhibition

KUWAIT (R) — Human rights activists said they had cancelled an exhibition about missing Kuwaitis believed held by Iraq, the government objected to the event, due to have been staged on Saturday. Members of the Kuwait branch of the Cairo-based Arab Organisation for Human Rights said by telephone they had received a letter from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour saying they ought not to hold such an event because they had no government licence. The exhibition was to have been held under the patronage of Parliament Speaker and opposition veteran Ahmad Al Saudoun. The venue was the Kuwaiti Graduates' Society, an association of professionals, which is licensed.

Israeli premier expected in Spain Monday

MADRID (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is expected here Monday for two days of talks with his Spanish counterpart Felipe Gonzalez and King Juan Carlos. The implementation of Israeli-Palestinian peace accords signed last September and economic issues will top Mr. Rabin's agenda during the visit. Mr. Rabin is to meet with business and opposition leaders Monday. Tuesday he will visit Toledo where Christians, Muslims and Jews lived together peacefully until Spanish monarchs had non-Christians expelled from the country at the end of the 15th century. King Juan Carlos was in Israel in early November last year.

Libya rules out immediate Aouzou pullout

TUNIS (R) — Libya has ruled out an immediate withdrawal from the Aouzou Strip which was awarded to Chad earlier this month by the International Court of Justice in the Hague. Tripoli-based diplomats said. Libya is also demanding that the United States return to Libya hundreds of soldiers who were captured in fighting with Chad in 1987 and later went to the United States, a Chadian diplomat, who asked to not be named, told Reuters by telephone. The diplomat was speaking at the end of a visit to Tripoli by Chad's Minister for Civil Service and Labour Wadel Abdul Kader Kamougue during which he handed Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi a message from President Idriss Deby demanding an early Libyan withdrawal from the Aouzou Strip.

Mirsalim wants to purge Western influence

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's newly nominated culture and Islamic guidance minister says he wants to purge the Islamic republic of "corrupt" Western influences. Mostafa Mirsalim, nominated as minister last week, said Iranians should take inspiration from Islamic culture. "In order to do so extensive programmes must be undertaken so that whatever remains of the corrupt elements of the Western arts in Iran will be for ever purged," he said in an interview with the official news agency, IRNA. "The intellectual destruction of the Islamic republic as well as the discovery of the ways and means to penetrate the revolutionary and Muslim people of Iran are among the long-term programmes of the enemies of Islam," he said. Iran's parliament has to approve the nomination before Mr. Mirsalim, now an advisor to President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, can formally take up his post.

Some 35,000 Iranians work in Japan

TEHRAN (AFP) — Some 35,000 Iranian labourers are currently working in Japan as a result of extremely low wages in Iran, Labour Minister Hussein Kamali said. Mr. Kamali, quoted on Saturday by Resalat newspaper, said the average worker in Iran made from \$50 to \$60 a month, "nearly one-fourth of his expenses," which he estimated at around \$200. He said some 35,000 Iranians were working in Japan, where "wages are 30 times higher than those in Iran." A large portion of Iranian migrants are working illegally in Japan because of an agreement, since revoked, that let Iranians enter Japan without a visa.

Bhutto cleared of alleged abuse of powers

LAHORE (AFP) — Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was acquitted by a special court here Saturday in a case of alleged misconduct during her earlier 20-month stint as premier. The case, in which she was accused of allotting control of liquefied gas distribution agencies to favoured colleagues, was brought against her by former President Ghulam Ishaq Khan after he dismissed her government in August 1990. Justice Munir A. Sheikh ruled that the charge against Mr. Bhutto, who was reelected prime minister after a general election in October last year, could not be upheld, court officials said.

Israel insisting on limited detainee release

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — One of the key hurdles in an agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in their autonomy negotiations is an Israeli insistence that no members of groups opposing the autonomy agreement would be released from Israeli jails, informed sources said Saturday.

The sources could not confirm reports that Mohammad Zahlan, who heads the Palestinian side to the negotiations on prison release, was refusing to return to the talks next week in protest against what he saw as the PLO's gradual move towards accepting the Israeli condition.

Having made progress in reaching agreements on key security issues and a general framework for a Palestinian

police force to deploy in the Gaza Strip and Jericho under the Sept. 13 autonomy plan, Israel and the PLO are unable to move forward on the prisoner release issue, the sources said.

"The Israelis are insisting that no known supporter of the hardline groups which oppose the autonomy agreement will be released," said a source familiar with the negotiations held at the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Tabaa.

"The Palestinians have been resisting this, demanding that a prisoner release come under a general amnesty covering all Palestinian detainees regardless of their affiliation," said the source.

Independent Palestinian analysts said PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat appeared to be betting on a mass release of Palestinians from Israeli prisons to dilute opposition to the

autonomy accord.

"Arafat's comments on Friday have reaffirmed his approach," said one analyst. He was referring to a statement by the PLO chairman during a visit to the Netherlands that he could not "sign a final agreement without having a guarantee for the release of all prisoners."

Red Cross figures indicate that 9,000 Palestinians are held in Israeli jails while PLO officials say the figure is closer to 12,000. Israel puts the number of detainees at 6,000.

Israel has agreed in principle to a prisoner release but ruled out a general amnesty.

According to PLO sources, more than half of the detainees belong to groups such as the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Democratic Front for the Li-

beration of Palestine (DFLP) and other factions which have vowed to wreck the autonomy agreement.

But in line with his strategy to create goodwill among the Palestinians, Mr. Arafat has been demanding that Israel make no discrimination among the prisoners.

Sources among the dissident groups also said that despite their fierce opposition to the self-rule accord, Mr. Arafat and his aides had been insisting that their members also be released from Israeli detention.

"I do not know whether there was any shift in the PLO stand last week in Tabaa, but our information is that Arafat is refusing to accept anything less than a complete prisoner release," said a prominent figure among the dissidents.

Meanwhile, an independent Palestinian source said Mr. Zahlan, a member of the Palestine National Council from the Gaza Strip, was refusing to return to the negotiations with Israel.

"Mr. Zahlan believes that the PLO is going to accept the Israeli condition against releasing members of groups which do not support the autonomy accord," said the source. "As such, he wants no part of the deal since he would not be able to live with such a compromise."

The other sources said they were not aware of a shift in the PLO stand that would prompt such a response from Mr. Zahlan.

"The PLO negotiators (in Tabaa) have not accepted any compromise over prisoner release," said the source. "The issue is very much on the table, and it would be dealt with when the talks resume" in Cairo on Monday.

Iraq, Iran agree to improve relations

NICOSIA (AP) — Former war foes Iran and Iraq said Saturday they want to improve relations, but gave no indication how they would overcome their fierce rivalry.

Iraq, internationally isolated and under U.N. trade sanctions since its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, is eager to forget hostilities from the 1980-88 war with Iran and improve ties with its eastern neighbour.

And cash-strapped Iran is anxious to boost commercial ties with Baghdad, which is in need of everything, from foodstuffs to medicines and consumer goods due to U.N. sanctions.

Tehran Radio, monitored in Nicosia, said the agreement to forge closer ties came in a meeting in Tehran between Iran's deputy foreign minister, Javad Zarif, and the Iraqi foreign ministry undersecretary, Saad Al Faisal.

Mr. Faisal called for closer ties with Iran in his first round of talks with Mr. Zarif early Saturday, the radio reported.

It said both sides underscored the need to "create grounds for mutual trust aimed at expanding ties," but did not elaborate.

Neither was there any mention in the report of the Iran-Iraq war, which claimed more than one million lives on both sides in the longest conventional war of the century.

Since the end of the war in August 1988, Iran and Iraq have traded more than 37,000 prisoners of war. But Iran still holds 20,000 prisoners and Iraq has 5,000, according to the Red Cross.

When Mr. Faisal and his seven-member delegation arrived in Tehran Thursday for week-long talks, Iran's Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said talks with Iranian officials would focus on the fate of remaining prisoners of war.

Iran has denied Western and Arab reports that it has been engaged in efforts to boost trade ties with Iraq. But Iranian officials have hinted that the trade ban on Iraq should be lifted.

Diplomats in Tehran say there already is considerable cross border trade between Iran and Iraq in contravention

of U.N. terms which ban everything but humanitarian aid to Iraq.

But the biggest stumbling block to better relations are the opposition groups both Iran and Iraq have sheltered and cultivated against the other.

One of Iran's key demands for better ties is that Iraq expel members of the Baghdad-based opposition group, Mujahadeen-e-Khalq.

In November Maryam Rajavi, wife of Mujahadeen leader Masoud Rajavi, left Baghdad and sought refuge in France after being named Iran's "future president" by the Mujahadeen.

Last month Iraq's President Saddam Hussein met in Baghdad with Masoud Rajavi, the Iraqi News Agency reported. It did not disclose what was discussed, but the meeting preceded Mujahadeen military manoeuvres which ended last week.

Earlier this month, forces of the Iran-based Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, a coalition of Shiite Muslim forces opposed to the Baghdad regime, staged a military parade in southern Iraq.

Diplomats in Tehran say the group has curtailed its political activities in Iraq, perhaps in response to pressure from Iranian authorities.

Despite differences on other fronts, Baghdad and Tehran both oppose the Western-backed Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq where a de facto state with its own administrative body has been established.

Tehran opposes the idea of a Kurdish homeland for fear it could encourage the 6.5 million Kurds in Iran to demand autonomy.

Other outstanding issues between Tehran and Baghdad include advanced warplanes and jetliners which Iraq flew to Iran for safekeeping during the 1991 war against the U.S.-led forces that liberated Kuwait.

Iraq claims it sent 170 planes, but Iran says there were only 27.

Iran has said it intends to keep the planes as partial payment for damages it is seeking from its war with Iraq.

Iraq says it no longer has mass destruction weapons

DOHA (Agencies) — Iraq no longer has any weapons of mass destruction and is fulfilling Gulf war ceasefire conditions set by the United Nations, Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Shihaf has said.

"Iraq is implementing (U.N. Security Council) Resolution 687 and no longer has any weapons of mass destruction or the capacity to manufacture them," Mr. Shihaf said in an interview shown on Qatari state television late Friday.

The resolution set the terms for ending the 1991 Gulf war, in particular the elimination of all Baghdad's programmes for nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

U.N. sanctions, including an oil embargo, were imposed four days after Iraq invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990. Mr. Shihaf accused certain members of the Security Council, "notably the United States," of prolonging the political and economic embargo "for political reasons totally unrelated to the (Gulf) crisis."

He reiterated Iraq's refusal

to export some of its oil under U.N. supervision, in accordance with Resolution 706.

"This resolution cannot be applied because it has changed from being a humanitarian resolution to a colonialist one," he said.

It was the second time a senior Iraqi official had appeared on Qatari television since the Gulf crisis.

Last Saturday the television screened a report on Iraq's economic problems under the U.N. embargo, and invited Iraqi Commerce Minister Mohammad Mahdi Saleh to speak on the programme.

Apart from Oman, Qatar is the only member of the six-country Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to have renewed contacts with Baghdad since the Gulf war.

The other GCC members are Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

On Thursday Mr. Shihaf told the U.N. Human rights Commission in Geneva "the lifting of the iniquitous blockade and the injustice done to the Iraqi people is a humanitarian responsibility."

Defence ridicules blast prosecution

NEW YORK (R) — A defence lawyer in the World Trade Centre bomb trial ridiculed the government's case Friday, making as much as possible from a bizarre blunder by a key witness who identified jurors instead of suspects.

Hassen Abdullah, who represents Mahmoud Abu Halima, an Egyptian-born limousine driver accused of helping to build and transport the bomb, capitalised on the prosecution's mistake during closing arguments.

In a dramatic summation, Mr. Abdullah took the witness stand and imitated witnesses who were unable to identify his client even though he has distinctive red hair. He then approached the jury and in a loud, angry tone, accused prosecutors of trying to be "slick" but said their strategy failed.

"Thank you, Mr. Depippo," he said repeatedly, referring to

assistant U.S. attorney Henry Depippo.

Mr. Abu Halima and three other defendants, Mohammad Salameh, Ahmad Ajaj, and Nidal Ayyad are on trial for planting the Feb. 26, 1993 bomb that tore through the world's largest office building.

The blast killed six and injured more than 1,000. Mr. Abdullah said in his summation, which began late Thursday, that government witness Willie Hernandez Moosh was the one who "dropped a bomb" when he pointed to jurors instead of defendants.

Mr. Moosh, a gas station attendant, testified in December that on the day of the blast, he pumped fuel for two of the defendants travelling in the van believed to have carried the bomb and for the driver of an accompanying blue car.

Prosecutors had expected him to point out Mr. Salameh

as the driver of the van and Mr. Abu Halima as the driver of the car. Instead he pointed to two of the jurors.

"He picked the wrong man because he never saw Mr. Abu Halima," Mr. Abdullah said.

The defence lawyer said another witness, who the government claimed had seen Mr. Abu Halima visiting Salameh and Ramzi Yousef, a fugitive also named in the case, could not identify Abu Halima in the Abu Halima courtroom. The witness said the man he saw had strangely-coloured red hair.

Mr. Abdullah said the government then tried to coax the witness by asking him if he saw anyone in the courtroom with that colour hair instead of asking him to identify the person he saw on the street.

"This is really slick stuff they did. Oh, what a tangled web we weave," he said.

4 injured in Egypt train attack

CAIRO (Agencies) — Two foreign women and two Egyptians were wounded in a militant gun attack on a night train travelling through southern Egypt, authorities said Saturday.

A bullet struck a 24-year-old Taiwanese student in the back and another hit a 35-year-old Polish architect in the hand, but both were recovering well in a hospital in Assiut, officials said. Two Egyptians were also hospitalised.

Several Japanese were slightly hurt by flying glass

during the attack that occurred when the Cairo-Assiut express slowed down before Bqour village, some 430 kilometres south of the capital Cairo, witnesses added.

But the Japanese travelled on to Luxor.

Witnesses said the attack involved up to six gunmen whom police suspected were members of the outlawed fundamentalist Islamic group Al Gama'a Al Islamiyah which has warned foreigners to leave Egypt.

The Interior Ministry later said that only one gunman had been involved in the 1:30 a.m. Saturday (2330 GMT Friday) attack, which took place shortly after the train had left the Assiut railway station heading south.

According to witnesses, slogans such as "Islam is coming" and "Revenge for our martyrs," were inscribed on the cartridges, indicating that the attackers were Muslim militants.

(Continued on page 3)

Faisal says she is determined to pursue her case against Kreisha

By Mariam M. Shahin Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — In her efforts to "protect and advance the democratic process" Lower House of Parliament Deputy Toujan Faisal said Saturday that she would continue her drive to strip fellow Deputy Jamal Kreisha of his immunity from prosecution and take him to court for slander, defamation and assault, despite efforts by fellow deputies to resolve the dispute through diplomatic means.

"If this incident goes unchecked and unpunished it will be a greenlight for others who are of the same frame of mind," said Ms. Faisal rejecting urgings by many of her fellow deputies to accept an apology from Mr. Kreisha and let bygones be bygones.

"I was told by people that once I entered public life I have to accept what happens to me. Well this is not acceptable," Ms. Faisal told the press after announcing that she was appealing to "local, Arab and international human rights and democratic organisations to protect and enhance Jordan's democratic process" by "adopting this case and supporting it."

"I have been threatened on the phone and indirectly by well-meaning deputies to drop this case and my other investigations into wrongdoings by some instruments of the security apparatus and other martial law remnants. But threats don't frighten me," she told the press conference.

Ms. Faisal responded to a tribal statement issued this weekend by community leaders representing Circassian, Chechen and Bani Sakher leaders saying: "This was never a tribal issue, I did not make it one. Mr. Kreisha tried to make

it one by cursing my ethnic community. Parliament tried to make it one by resolving it according to tribal norms. But I refuse to accept this as a tribal question. It is and remains a political issue that will be dealt with in the court room."

Ms. Faisal went into great detail to explain why she was so adamant about not accepting a tribal coffee and apology from Mr. Kreisha. "The precedent is too dangerous for our whole society," she said.

Ms. Faisal made wide-ranging accusations at "individuals who drew strength and power from the martial law system in the past and that continue to abuse their power in the age of democracy."

Ms. Faisal said she was reviewing some complaints about corruption that had been "shelved" by the last Parliament. In one case, Ms. Faisal said, she had documented that Mr. Kreisha was "implicated."

He had been the head of the community responsible for investigating the case which was passed on to the administrative committee of which he was the head. This case was shelved and forgotten," she said.

Ms. Faisal said she had documents to prove that gross violations of individual rights were on-going in Jordan. A "female" Ministry of Health employee was subjugated to a physical beating by a male employee only one day after Mr. Kreisha's alleged attack on Ms. Faisal was publicised, she told the press.

"This Ministry of Health employee was cooperating with an investigation instigated by the minister of health and she was beaten by a fellow employee who disapproved of the investigation. If this is a taste of how we are going to run the country then I see red

lights everywhere," Ms. Faisal said.

Ms. Faisal said she was in the process of investigating several "major human rights violations," some allegedly perpetrated by members of the security departments.

Several members of the press pointed out to Ms. Faisal that her accusations were far-reaching, and she replied "I have documentation on everything and the people who are calling me to threaten me to keep quiet have mentioned the cases of abuses that I am investigating. It puzzles me how a deputy of the people can be threatened for looking into issues of public rights."

Ms. Faisal, who hopes that her request to lift Mr. Kreisha's immunity from prosecution will be met by her fellow deputies, says that she will pursue Mr. Kreisha even if her request is not met.

"I will leave the lawsuit until Parliament is adjourned and then I will not need the approval of my fellow deputies to take Mr. Kreisha to court. However, I do hope that they will get a chance to vote so I and the people can know what kind of deputies they really are," Ms. Faisal said.

During the hour-and-a-half meeting with the press at her Um Summag home Saturday, Ms. Faisal reviewed the events that led up to the alleged incidents and assault incident between her and Deputy Kreisha. Her case was scheduled to be presented to the Lower House, but Sunday's agenda for the House makes no mention of the dispute.

Lower House Speaker Taher Al Masri has said the issue of lifting immunity on Mr. Kreisha would be forwarded to the House's Judiciary Committee — of which Ms. Faisal is a member.

COLUMN

Florida man arrested in plot to kill Clinton

WASHINGTON (R) — A Florida man has been arrested and charged with threatening to kill President Bill Clinton after stalking his jogging route in Washington, officials said Friday. The man was identified by court documents filed in U.S. District Court in Orlando as Ronald Gene Barbour. He was picked up Thursday at the lakeside psychiatric facility in Orlando, according to James Glazebrook, an assistant U.S. attorney general in Orlando. Mr. Barbour, who appeared to be about 45 years old, is being held without bond at the Seminole County Jail in Orlando and U.S. prosecutors have requested a psychiatric evaluation for him, said Mr. Glazebrook, adding that no plea had been entered. White House officials said Mr. Clinton's typical jogging route on the mall, a large grassy park in central Washington, in mid-January when Mr. Clinton was on a trip to Europe and Russia. The Secret Service, which made the arrest, declined to discuss the case.

Japan empress speaks for 1st time in 4 months

TOKYO (R) — Japan's Empress Michiko has spoken again nearly four months after a mystery illness struck her Saturday. The breakthrough apparently came last Sunday as she and Emperor Akihito were visiting the remote Ogasawara Islands in the Pacific, midway between Tokyo and Guam. The Imperial Household Agency said the 59-year-old empress watched a small turtle into the sea. Then she said to him: "When the next wave comes, the turtle can return to the sea, can't it?" The empress then happily broke the news of her recovery to accompanying officials, the court agency said. Emperor Akihito revealed that she spoke several more times to islanders the next day, the agency said. Empress Michiko collapsed on her birthday on Oct. 20 and was said to be suffering from an illness caused by "deep sorrow." There has been speculation that her depression was partly caused by a spate of critical magazine articles. The imperial couple's visit marked the 25th anniversary of the return of the Ogasawaras, or Bonin Islands, from U.S. occupation to Japanese rule.

Bardot berates Norwegian king over whale-hunting

PARIS (AFP) — French actress Brigitte Bardot has written to Norwegian King Harald V to protest at whale-hunting, a statement said Friday. Ms. Bardot told the king that Norway's decision last year to resume whale-hunting overturning a moratorium in effect since 1986 "seriously compromises Norway's entry into the European Community, as one of its rules is a ban on the use of whale products." The actress also denounced the Norwegian government for giving permission for "43 lynx to be killed in 1994, considering there are only a few hundred left in Norway." A statement from her charity the Brigitte Bardot Foundation published Friday, said she had written to the king Wednesday.

U.S. court bans marijuana for medical use

WASHINGTON (AP) — Backers of the medical use of marijuana lost a battle in the effort to force the U.S. government to let people use the drug to ease the effects of cancer, AIDS and other diseases. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit upheld the Bush administration's decision in 1992 not to let doctors prescribe marijuana to their patients. That decision was supported by substantial evidence, the court said, noting that many medical experts testified "that marijuana's medicinal value has never been proven in sound scientific studies." The Clinton administration has said it is reconsidering the ban. Arnold Trebach of the Drug Policy Foundation urged the government to reverse the policy.

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